Liberty University

Some Aspects of the Theology of the City in ANE Literature and Biblical Protology and Eschatology: A Comparative Study

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by

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Dedication

To the ones who have stood with me through thick and thin all these years on my journey toward academic excellence: My gratitude, respect, and love for you are unwavering and unceasing.

יֵשׁ אֹהֵב דָּבֵק מֵאָח

Proverbs 18:24

Abstract

The city is an essential accomplishment that is embedded in the foundations of human civilization. From its mature appearance in Sumer and its developed forms throughout the ANE world, the city held a high place in cosmology, cosmogony, and anthropogony. The ideology and theology of the city created by the ANE peoples were built around and presented through the interplay of the triangle of influences and dependencies formed by the city, the temple, and kingship in conjunction with the gods. The question is whether the same construct is ingeminated in the Bible.

This dissertation strives to provide an appropriate context in order to critically assess the relatedness between the ANE and biblical views on the city, specifically from the perspective of the biblical protology (Genesis 1–11) and eschatology (Revelation 21–22). It also aims to understand the biblical attitudes towards the city, their coordination and complementarity in addressing the ANE views, their conceptual direction, as well as their theoretical and practical consequences.

Contents

Abbreviations

ABD	The Anchor Bible Dictionary
AENB	Ancient Egyptian Netherworld Books
AJHG	*The American Journal of Human Genetics*
AJSL	*The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*
AO	*Acta Orienlalia*
ANET	Ancient Near Eastern Text Related to the Old Testament
ANETD	*The Ancient Near East Today*
AS	*Acta Sumeriologica*
ASD	Assyrian Dictionary
ATJ	*The Asbury Theological Journal*
AUS	*Andrews University Seminary Studies*
BA	*The Biblical Archaeologist*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BD	Book of the Dead
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament
BET	*Bulletin of Ecclesial Theology*
BF1	Before the Muses, Vol.1
BF2	Before the Muses, Vol.2
BS	*Bibliotheca Sacra*
CAH	Cambridge Ancient History
CBQ	*The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CC	*Cross Currents*
CENTJ	*CEN Technical Journal*
CPST	*Christian Perspectives on Science and Technology*
CRJ	*Christian Research Journal*
CS	Context of Scripture
CT	Coffin Texts
CTJ	*Calvin Theological Journal*
CTR	*Canadian Theological Review*
DBLSD	Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains, Logos
DTIB	Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible

EA	*Ex Auditu*
EAD	*Eruditio Ardescens*
EB	Early Bronze
EB	*BMC Evolutionary Biology*
EBA	Early Bronze Age
EIA	Early Iron Age
ESK	Epics of Sumerian Kings
ETCSL	Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature
GRBS	*Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*
HAR	*Hebrew Annual Review*
HB	*Human Biology*
HBC	*Horizons in Biblical Theology*
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
IA	Iron Age
IDB	Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible
JANER	*Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions*
JANES	*Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies*
JCTR	*Journal for Christian Theological Research*
JESHO	*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JHS	*Journal of Hebrew Scripture*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JNSL	*Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*
JR	*The Journal of Religion*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JTI	*Journal of Theological Interpretation*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
KTU	Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit (also CAT), sigla for texts found at Ugarit
KUB	Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi

LAS	The Literature of Ancient Sumer
LB	Late Babylonian
LBA	Late Bronze Age
LC	Late Chalcolithic
LN	Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*
MA	Middle Assyrian
MB	Middle Babylonian
MBA	Middle Bronze Age
NA	Neo-Assyrian
NAC	New American Commentary
NB	Neo-Babylonian
NER	Near Eastern Religious Texts Relating to the Old Testament
NHK	Neo-Hittite Kingdom
NIVAC	NIV Application Commentary
NS	Neo-Sumerian
NT	*Novum Testamentum*
OB	Old Babylonian
OHK	Old Hittite Kingdom
OI	*Oriental Institute*
OS	*Old Sumerian*
PAPS	*Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*
PE	*Pro Ecclesia*
PLoS ONE	*Public Library of Science*
PNA	Pottery Neolithic A
PNB	Pottery Neolithic B
PPNA	Pre-Pottery Neolithic A
PPNB	Pre-Pottery Neolithic B
PT	Pyramid Texts
QVO	*Quaderni di Vicino Oriente*
RAAO	*Revue d'assyriologie et d'archeologie orientale*
RJ	*Reformed Journal*
SA	*Studia Antiqua*

SIDA	*Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis*
SJOT	*Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
SKL	Sumerian King's List
SMEA	*Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici*
TC	*Textual Cultures*
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
TB	*Tyndale Bulletin*
THTO	The Harps That Once…
TJ	*Theological Journal*
TPR	*The Town Planning Review*
TRJ	*Trinity Journal*
TT	*Theology Today*
UA	*Usuteaduslik Ajakiri*
UF	*Ugarit Forschungen*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
WTJ	*The Westminster Theological Journal*
WW	*Word & World*
WTJ	*Westminister Theology Journal*
ZAVA	*Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie*

Chapter 1: Defining the Parameters for the Study

The unprecedented growth of the cities and the amalgamations of the large urban nodes will result in a planetary Gigalopolis[1] in less than a hundred years from now. This represents not only a socio-economic and cultural challenge, but also a theological one. Strangely, reflection on the meaning and significance of the city started making inroads into biblical scholarship and theology in a significant and substantive way only in the early seventies of the twentieth century.[2] This belated theological and scholarly trend is even more curious considering that, in a sense, the biblical history of humanity starts with the city of man, and resets with the city of God.

Problem

It can be said that human civilization is, by and large, an urban product. The importance of the city was so great that it found a salient place in the early Sumerian and Akkadian cosmologies, which accorded it a place in the order of creation.[3] Indeed, not only the past and present of ANE peoples were closely related to the city but, also, their future in terms of eternal destiny. The ancient writings provide a glimpse into the religious, historical, cultural, and ideological worlds of their authors and readers.[4] Almost invariably, the city appears as one of the key symbols in the ANE world, most notably in Mesopotamia, whose sages were keenly aware

[1] The enormous growth of the cities during the last two centuries and the recent appearance of the egapolis (city that spans over and connects two or more cities or areas), have prompted some to think of the world as an ecumenopolis, or "a city made of the whole world." See, Apostolos C. Doxiadis, *Anthropopolis: City for Human Development* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1975), 42. However, even these mega-cities and regions are growing and agglomerating in even bigger urban areas, thus gigalopolis.

[2] Such works are Raymond J. Bakke and Jim Hart, *The Urban Christian: Effective Ministry in Today's Urban World* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1987); Robert C. Linthicum, *City of God, City of Satan* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991); Raymond J. Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1997); Ronald E. Peters, *Urban Ministry: An Introduction* (Nashville, TN.: Abingdon Press, 2007); and Harvie M. Conn and Manuel Ortiz, *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom, the City & the People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010).

[3] Gwendolyn Leick, *Mesopotamia: The Invention of the City* (London, UK: Penguin Books, 2003), 2.

[4] Wenham says that an "understanding of ancient oriental mythology is essential if we are to appreciate the points Gen 1–11 was making", Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), xlv.

of its pivotal role in commencing and shaping their civilization and, thus, highly elevated it.

It is true that the biblical creation narrative (and consequently its new creation counterpart) is analogous to the cognate accounts in the ANE literature. Therefore, the early appearance of the city in the Bible and consequent attention throughout the Scriptures should not be surprising. Yet, the canonical treatment, namely protology and eschatology, of city takes a different tangent in comparison to the ANE world—it is *ab initio* and *tandem* quite negative.

Rationale for This Study

It is well established that some passages related to the city in Genesis 1–11 resonate with the general ANE and, more particularly, Mesopotamian historical situation and literature. The investigation of similarities between the ideas and traditions in these sources and the Bible has been two-pronged: one was interested in individual narrative segments in Genesis 1–11, including the Garden pericope in Chapter 2, the Nimrod city-building program in Chapter 10, and the Tower in Babel story in Chapter 11. However, most of these efforts were guided by a particular agenda and diachronic. Hence, they were not interested in the possible interrelatedness and sequential escalating development of the Genesis accounts related to the city.

The second prong is represented by the scholars who appreciate the unity of the Bible and focus their attention on some arguably important aspects of the Genesis-Revelation literary, thematic, typological, and verbal links. Accordingly, these approaches bring both texts within definite theological parameters either in: (a) general terms of the biblical theology of the city; (b) as a subspecies of theology of divine presence; (c) as a protological-eschatological category; and/or (d) as a subject of anthropological studies, such as urbanology. As such, these types of inquiries are, to a considerable extent, confined to biblical theology. But presently, they display minimal and/or fragmentary interest in the parallels between traditions and ideas related to the

city in the ANE sources and the Bible, especially within the protology and eschatology paradigms.

For instance, much effort is invested in addressing the typological "garden temple" in Genesis 2 and its eschatological escalation in the city of New Jerusalem. By far, these inquiries and reflections are valid, important, and needed.[5] However, due to their distinct focuses, none of these studies explicate what is so particular about the city as to incite a recurring attention to it in protology and to merit a repeated and very definite treatment in eschatology. Consequently, the negative attitude toward the city in the Scriptures, which is clearly recognized by scholars and theologians, is summarily treated without closer attention to the underlying reasons, and often dismissed or explained away; it is even perceived as counterproductive for the urban evangelistic outreach. Therefore, more specific research is needed that would address these issues.

Statement of the Thesis

This inquiry contends that the particular interest and treatment of the city in biblical protology and eschatology is not accidental but represents a programmatic theological reaction and commentary on Israel's religious and cultural context. This orientation is grounded in the fact that the ANE worldview in general and the Mesopotamian worldview in particular, are characterized by a very definite understanding of the city, which attributes its indispensable place in the divine economy of the universe. The Bible, in its canonical shape, ultimately rejects such a view, especially its anthropic form. So, while protology extends criticism of the prevalent ANE concepts of city, eschatology, in a complementary way, presents a radically different solution.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

To address the aforementioned issues and forward this research, the following questions

[5] See, Block's (contra-Walton) sharp criticism of the idea that Eden was a proto-temple, Daniel I. Block, "Eden: A Temple? A Reassessment of the Biblical Evidence," in *From Creation to New Creation: Biblical Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Daniel Gurtner and Benjamin L. Gladd (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2013), 3–32.

and working hypotheses are suggested:

> Q1. What are the primary ideas related to the city in the ANE literature, and what concerns stand behind a rather qualified and deterring position toward the city in the biblical protology?
>
> Q2. Since the Book of Revelation, which offers the ultimate eschatological view, reverberates the ideas exposited in Genesis 1–11 and announces the completion of creation in new creation, how are these attitudes addressed and shaped in eschatology, and with what theological conclusions?

First hypothesis: Many elements in biblical primeval history stand in tacit opposition to the common ancient views.[6] The reason for this is that the city is not a religiously neutral concept or symbol—it is intrinsically related to polytheism and anthropomorphic concepts of deities. From the biblical perspective, this perspective is idolatrous. So, the creation narrative addresses the city both in a discreet and invariably negative way due to the sharp and unbridgeable theological differences regarding everything it symbolizes and entails in the ANE world.

Second hypothesis: The biblical protology and eschatology are interrelated in their attitudes toward the city. Consequently, the theology of the city in the Bible cannot be properly understood without taking both into consideration. All the more, the writer of Revelation builds on protology to present a very particular vision of the future world and human destiny in it. In the process, he redefines the city as a symbol and metaphor, which point to a distinct reality of the completed creation that is substantially different and antithetical to the ANE concepts.

Purpose and Objectives of This Study

This study proposes to take a different approach from past and present inquiries and address the existing scholarly gap in a thematic and critical way by (a) investigating the city's origin, place, and purpose in selected ANE literature and (b) comparing their prevalent

[6] For example, Walton does not perceive Genesis 1 as strictly polemical yet allows that it could be understood as such, see John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate* (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2009), 102–3.

theological and/or ideological themes and motifs with the views presented in the biblical protology and eschatology. The objectives of this comparative effort are to: (1) describe and critically assess the principal attributes of the city in selected ANE literature; (2) determine and explain biblical theological affinities toward the city by contrasting them with the ideas present in these sources; (3) examine the relationship between theological accents related to the city in the biblical protology and eschatology; and thereby, (4) suggest a more comprehensive theological statement that explicates and clarifies the biblical attitude toward and, thereof, vision of the city.

History and Review of Related Research and Literature

Christianity started two thousand years ago as a city religion[7] and slowly won the known world by spreading the evangel primarily, though not exclusively, throughout large urban areas. Secular sociologist-historian Rodney Stark explains that the early church successfully created an alternative society, a piece of heaven on earth. This society was so compelling that the Roman Empire finally, by the 4th century, surrendered to it.[8] However, apart from a few scattered commentaries on the selected Scriptures,[9] the early Christians did not leave much, if anything, in terms of sustained theological exposition on the city. Even Augustine's *De civitate dei* is an extended, apologetical-theological-political pamphlet contrasting Paganism and the church, the two societies and two ways of life expressed metaphorically as two cities, earthly and heavenly. Although Augustine's rumination was far ahead of his time, his theological allegory that presented the church as a city within the city did not provide a viable theological model for

[7] As opposed to a rural district or *pagus*, "a small settlement" or "village" in Latin, therefore Paganism.

[8] Rodney Stark, *Cities of God: The Real Story of How Christianity Became an Urban Movement and Conquered Rome* (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2007), 14.

[9] See the comments compiled from the patristic literature on Gen 4:16–22. Andrew Louth, ed., *Genesis 1–11, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Old Testament*, vol. 1 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2001), 109–11.

further reflection and development. At any rate, city as a theme in the Bible was left untouched for centuries.

The coming of the Protestant Reformation brought a renewed interest in the Scriptures with an emphasis on literal interpretation and mastery of biblical languages, both of which constitute foundational elements necessary for the practice and development of biblical theology. This meant that every theme in the Bible could be a legitimate object of reflection and potentially a subject of theological discourse. However, the situation the Reformers were facing made them wrestle with a plethora of other urgent issues related to theological and ideological disputes with the Roman Catholic Church and the State. Naturally, this situation did not stimulate any ruminative venture on the city. Rather, the issue of salvation with its focus on Paul and his fragmentary treatment of Genesis 2–3 in the Epistle to Romans (Rom. 5:12–19) diverted the scholarly and reflective attention from the rest of primeval history and its other weighty theological accents. This state of limited interest in anything outside Genesis 1–3 lasted until modern times and, to some extent, still dominates and directs investigative curiosity even now.[10]

On the other hand, sensational discoveries of monumental cities and great ANE civilizations during the 19th and a large part of the 20th centuries have caused great excitement among scholars of every provenance. Thus, constant explorations throughout Egypt, the Levant, Syria, Anatolia, and Mesopotamia have unearthed temples, palaces, and private libraries. Various written artifacts found there reflect different literary genres and treat a plethora of subjects. The most famous and important caches of tablets are Ashurbanipal's library, with about forty literary

[10] Westermann writing about the scholarly attitudes of his time, says that "God's mandate to the people, his creatures, and to the rest of creation was misjudged and distorted. Of the Prehistory, only the first three chapters of Genesis played a significant role, and chs. 4-11 remained obscure. In this way, chs. 3 and 4—one dealing with transgression against God and the other with transgression against fellow human being—were torn apart, a fact that had unprecedented consequences." Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11: A Commentary* (London, UK; Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1987), ix; Wenham agrees with Westermann noting that "Christian theologians have devoted most of their attention to Gen 1–11 or more precisely Gen 1–3." Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, xlv.

writings that include religious texts and epics, and the Ras Shamra corpus, which also contains some fifty narrative poems of religious significance.

For a long time, the Bible was considered the only existing or surviving body of ancient writings; however, the discovery and translation of these libraries with texts whose themes, styles, genres, and general purpose seemed conspicuously similar to those of the Old Testament, especially the primeval history. The sheer antiquity of these documents, combined with the liberal scholarship assumption that the biblical material is a product of the late composition, led to assertion that Mesopotamia and, later, Ugarit were the true sources of the biblical narratives. The greatest and worst attack on the integrity of the Bible came in the early 20th century from the positions of German cultural chauvinism by Friedrich Delitzsch in his three lectures published under the title *Babel and Bible*.[11] The book caused quite a controversy due to his interpretation of the alleged similarities between the Bible and Mesopotamian literature as nothing more than a primitive Jewish regurgitation of the old, noble Babylonian myths. The process of successive and sustained rebuttals of Delitzsch's and the like claims culminated in the classic compilation of the old and new articles on the subject in "*I Studied Inscriptions from Before the Flood*."[12] This collection of scholarly essays points to the common ancient pool of ideas and to substantial differences in the treatment of the same themes in the Bible and the Mesopotamian writings. However, the old habits persist, and statements coming from secular and liberal scholars that Scripture is, at best, influenced by, or at worst, plagiarizes the ancient sources, can still be encountered in academic circles. At any rate, time has proven that the biblical and the ANE

[11] Friedrich Delitzsch, *Babel and Bible: Two Lectures on the Significance of Assyriological Research for Religion* (Chicago, IL: Open Court Publishing, 1906), passim.

[12] *"I Studied Inscriptions from Before the Flood": Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1–11*, eds. Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994), passim.

studies need, depend on, and draw from each other.

Thus, there are four basic areas of reflection and research related to the city in the Bible: (a) ANE urbanology, (b) biblical urbanology, (c) comparative religion, and (d) biblical theology. The literature covering the first three fields is quite extensive in many respects, while, when it comes to biblical studies and theology with the city in purview, there are modest yet quite encouraging developments. At the same time, the list of titles related to the inquiry between protology and eschatology is steadily growing and expanding scholarly horizons.[13]

Since the material related to the city in the ANE world comes mostly from secular Assyriologists, historians, sociologists, urbanologists, and anthropologists, it does not fall within the immediate purview of most biblical scholars and theologians. Moreover, the fact that secular scholars often look at religious aspects of ancient societies from different ideological platforms and, consequently, downplay the underlying belief systems in their formation, only exacerbates the problem. Likewise, the interest in the city is quite novel among biblical scholars and theologians; therefore, there is a level of uncertainty when approaching this subject. Saying this, it is quite understandable and illustrative of the general attitude, that, at the beginning of his essay on the city in the Bible, Walter Brueggemann makes several broad statements pertinent to different areas of interest related to the city and the purpose of this research.

> The city is not a primal or intentional theme in the Bible. It is an incidental theme that surfaces only as a byproduct of other issues. Moreover, it is not likely that what is said about any ancient city, concrete or anticipatory, is directly pertinent to our urban issues. More specifically, the Bible finally cares only about Jerusalem. In order to make the linkage to the urgent issues facing our cities today, then, it is necessary to take "Jerusalem" as a free-ranging metaphor for all of our cities.[14]

[13] There is a constant inflow of monographs, treatises, doctoral dissertations, studies, and scholarly articles that bridge between these diverse scholarly domains, adding significantly and in a meaningful way to this treatise.

[14] Walter Brueggemann, *The Word That Redescribes the World: The Bible and Discipleship* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 75.

Though Brueggemann's observations need to be carefully weighed, the early appearance of the city in primordial history (Genesis 1–11) seems rather rudimentary and programmatic, not incidental. In its present canonical shape, the Bible starts and ends with the city in view; moreover, the theme of the city, whether explicitly or implicitly, is constantly present in the biblical narrative. This resonates well with the overall ANE attitude toward the city, as the ancient writings can attest. The results of modern anthropological and sociological inquiries amply support this position.

The City in Secular Anthropological Studies

The investigative work and reflection of the older generations of ANE scholars were quite in tune with the sensibilities and priorities expressed in ancient literature. One of the landmarks, as far as the efforts to understand the intellectual and emotional world of the ANE peoples are concerned, is *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man*.[15] This classic collection of essays from the middle of the 20th century is focused on the speculative thought behind the religious and political concepts of Egyptians, Mesopotamians, and Israelites. Although some ideas expressed in the book, such as mythopoeic theorizing, the relegation of myth as primitive pre-scientific non-rational reasoning, and the supremacy of Israel's intellectual thinking, are either dated or challenged, the breadth and depth of the essays and their proposed conclusions are largely still unsurpassed. Of special interest are Thorkild Jacobsen's musings on Mesopotamian thought, where he convincingly suggests that the prevalent and lasting worldview was based on the transposition of early Sumerian city-state experience onto the divine realm.[16] In time, he amended some of his views, but the main tangent of his ideas remained the same, as can be seen

[15] Henri A. Frankfort et al., *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man* (Chicago, IL; London, UK: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), passim.

[16] Thorkild Jacobsen "The Cosmos as a State," in *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man* (Chicago, IL; London, UK: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), 125–84.

in his later work, *The Treasures of Darkness*, where he develops them further.[17] Though sadly overlooked by many scholars, Jacobsen's ideas are still relevant and must be considered in comparative and biblical studies.

The City in Biblical Studies and Christian Anthropology

Echoing van de Mieroop's sentiments,[18] Franc Frick's published dissertation, *The City in Ancient Israel*, is an excellent example of productive crosspollination between urban and biblical studies, which apparently offers a more optimistic view of the city[19] in comparison to that of Jacques Ellul's. Frick takes Childe's criteria[20] as the framework for discussion of the city in the Old Testament.[21] In the process, he defines the city from the angle of Israel' experience[22] and engages with a variety of topics. The last chapter offers a valuable discussion of Israel's attitudes toward the city within the larger context of ANE urban history and practices.[23] Frick's analysis displays a definite awareness of human autonomous tendencies invested in and religious imports related to the city, both of which stand in contrast to his claim of the innate moral neutrality of the city that he essentially sees in utilitarian terms.[24] At any rate, Frick's work establishes an important converging point between the biblical and ANE studies related to the city.

The City in Comparative Religion Studies

Richard J. Clifford's *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible* is an

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[17] Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness: A History of Mesopotamian Religion* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1978), passim.

[18] Marc van de Mieroop *The Ancient Mesopotamian City*. Oxford, GB: New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997, passim.

[19] Franc Frick, *The City in Ancient Israel* (Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature, 1977), passim.

[20] V. Gordon Childe, "The Urban Revolution," *The Town Planning Review* 21, no. 1 (1950): 3–17.

[21] Frick, *City in Ancient Israel*, 9–10.

[22] Ibid., 25–61.

[23] Ibid., 171–231.

[24] Ibid., 230–31.

essential critical comparative analysis of ANE literature and the OT literary corpus[25] related to creation from four perspectives: process, result, manner of reporting, and criterion of truth. Though city is mentioned only in passing, as one of the elements frequently present in creation myths, Clifford points to the important typology in ANE literature: city, temple, and kingship invariably appear together. Both in method and format, *Creation Accounts* represents a roadmap for a proper and fruitful comparative study related to ANE texts and the Bible.

Although it does not belong to the field of comparative study of religion, Claus Westermann's *Genesis 1–11: A Commentary* deserves to be mentioned. Unlike many other commentaries published before and after, *Genesis 1–11* begins with an evaluation of the ANE sources purportedly behind the main ideas and themes recorded in primeval history.[26] Westermann also refers to Mesopotamian literature in the body of the commentary when he compares some selected texts with the individual biblical passages and assesses their relatedness. Unfortunately, his approach to ANE tradition versus the biblical record lacks the necessary critical comparison; instead, it is largely descriptive and, thus, limited. However, Westermann's fair treatment of the related material, the abundance of insights he offers, and the number of questions he raises, make his approach and reflections still highly relevant.

A step forward from Westermann's interest in the relatedness of the ANE sources to the primeval history narratives is Gordon J. Wenham's *Genesis 1–15*. Wenham's general observations on Genesis 1–11 and the Ancient Near East are very brief.[27] However, he incorporates numerous references to the relevant ANE texts and his critical comparative

[25] Richard J. Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible*. Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 1994, passim.

[26] Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11: A Commentary*, trans. John J. Scullion (London, GB; Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1987), 19–69.

[27] Wenham , *Genesis 1–15*, xxxv–xliv.

observations of their bearing on the biblical narratives in the body of the commentary. Wenham's assessment, that the primeval history relates to the ANE ideas in both positive and negative ways, yet primarily in a polemical way, is far reaching. As such, it is of great relevance for the treatment of the city in protology.

The City in Theology

When theological reflection is concerned, there are only a few comprehensive considerations of the subject of the city in the Bible that deserve particular attention. Jacques Ellul's *The Meaning of the City* is mature, broad in scope, and, more than anything else, a pioneering theological work on the city that is both focused on the Bible and also engages itself in reflection conversant with philosophy and sociology.[28] Starting with Genesis and finishing with Revelation, Ellul presents an amazingly comprehensive theology of the city. His reflection is, however, often criticized as being too pessimistic, partial, and abnegating any value and importance of the city, as well as the human need and experience related to it.[29] In terms of comparative religious studies, Ellul does not venture outside of the Bible, except in a few marginal notes. On the other hand, his groundbreaking work remains foundational and should be considered in further discussions of the subject.

Desmond T. Alexander's *From Eden to the New Jerusalem* is a fine specimen of thematic biblical theology with the city on its horizon.[30] He starts with Revelation 21–22 to demonstrate the presence of the common theme, which he defines as a meta-story that unites both Testaments, and then proceeds to entangle this metanarrative set by examining the introductory

[28] Jacques Ellul and John Wilkinson, *The Meaning of the City* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1970), passim.

[29] See Clinton E. Stockwell, "The Enchanting City: Theological Perspectives on the City in Post-Modern Dress," *Transformation* 9, no. 2 (April 1, 1992): 10–11.

[30] Desmond T. Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2009), passim.

chapters of the Bible, namely Genesis 1–3. Though, the city *per se* is not in his scope, Alexander properly identifies divine original intentions for humanity, gravitating in and around the Garden in Eden, with their final eschatological realization in the New Jerusalem, a Garden-City-Temple on new earth. Thus, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem* represents an important step in Alexander's movement toward a more focused and extensive treatment of the city.

In his most recent work, *The City of God and the Goal of Creation*, Alexander follows the development of the theme of city in both Testaments, from its beginning in Genesis 2 to Revelation 22.[31] He identifies the garden in Eden as the embodiment of the divine temple that was supposed to grow to the ends of the earth as a kind of proto-city, which finally finds its materialization in New Jerusalem in the New Earth. His argumentation of this notably valid idea suffers due to his decision to follow the theological-historical sequence, instead of the straight canonical approach with the implementation of Christology as the interpretative key and protology in eschatology as the framework. Although quite condensed, *The City of God and the Goal of Creation* is definitely a move in the right direction.

As already noted, the relationship between protology and eschatology is increasingly becoming a focus of scholarly attention. Thus, in the *Gospel of Genesis*, Warren A. Gage proposes to demonstrate structural parallels between macrocosmic (pre-diluvian) and microcosmic (post-diluvian) histories as they reflect divine purposes.[32] By distinguishing five recurring biblical themes set in Genesis 1–7, which are God, Man, Sin, Redemption (individual and corporate), and Judgment,[33] and then following their reiteration and development through the

[31] T. Desmond Alexander, Dane C. Ortlund, and Miles V. Van Pelt, *The City of God and the Goal of Creation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), passim.

[32] Warren A. Gage, *Gospel of Genesis: Studies in Protology and Eschatology* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1984), passim.

[33] Ibid., 5

Scriptures, Warren observes a significant relationship between the biblical protology and eschatology.[34] Curiously and unexpectedly, a chapter on the city is squeezed between the two-part exposition on judgment. This short treatise establishes the parallelism between Eden and Zion (the Temple) and asserts criticism of the cities of men.

Some Definitions

Protology

Protology[35] is still a rarely studied field of theology, though this situation has been changing due to the renewed interest in the Christological importance of the creation narrative.[36] Theologians and biblical scholars are, instead, primarily focused on cosmogony (the origin of the cosmos), cosmology (the structure of the world), and their theological relevance in relation to the divine purpose for humanity in God's creation. These approaches offer valuable insights; however, their locus is mostly on Genesis 1–3 and their view is fragmented due to ontological, scientific, anthropological, and other perspectives that motivate them.

On the other hand, the scope of protology is wider since it moves beyond the description of the creation mechanics and establishment of its elements in order to observe divine and human actions and their lasting effects on history. Protology, therefore, does not look at the creation and structuring of an orderly world as an end to itself but rather at their theological purpose, which is the contrivance of an appropriate environment that fosters the development of divine-to-human and human-to-human relationships. As such, it gives meaning and significance to creation and

[34] Ibid., 9.

[35] Protology is a branch of theology that is related to the study of origin and first things. The term protology is derived from the Greek word πρῶτος, which designates the first in a series such as time, space, or set. In LXX, πρῶτος often stands for Hebrew ראשון (*first, former, front*) in sense of time. As such, protology is focused on the beginnings of history, as the introductory chapters of the Bible describe it. See, LN, 606; also, TDNT, "πρῶτος, πρῶτον, πρωτοκαθεδρία, πρωτοκλισία, πρωτότοκος, πρωτοτοκεῖα, πρωτεύω".

[36] John V. Fesko, *Last Things First: Unlocking Genesis with the Christ of Eschatology* (Fearn, UK: Mentor, 2007), 31–34.

the things created. Within this paradigm, the foundation for redemptive history is set through the interplay of divine intentions and expectations, which are challenged by man's fallenness and his insatiable desire to provide a surrogate reality for himself apart from God.[37] As a result, several themes, motifs, characters, situations, and events emerge that, in their essential traits, keep reappearing throughout biblical history.

Essentially, the creation within protology reveals the blueprint of divine purposes, while protology itself outlines a map of the historical landscape that awaits man and the world in terms of developments and intended outcomes. As such, protology provides: (a) the basis of a biblical worldview; (2) the foundation for the rest of Scripture; and (3) historical direction.

Eschatology

Eschatology[38] is concerned with the fulfillment of redemptive history and looks toward the future with the expectation of events that will mark the terminal point of the present world. It gives hope and provides sense to creation because it points to the final resolve of the conflict and crisis that hold the grip over the present state of things and, thus, anticipates a new, and in every respect, better reality secured in God's presence and embrace.[39]

Eschatology is generally taken in a narrow sense and relegated to "dealing with the

[37] Thus, Rahner says, "that the progress of the history of salvation is the progress of protology in the progressive development of its starting-point." See Karl Rahner, *Encyclopedia of Theology: A Concise Sacramentum Mundi* (London, GB: Burns & Oates, 2004).

[38] Eschatology is a branch of theology that is related to the study of the final events of history and the destiny of humanity and creation. Eschatology is derived from ἔσχατος, which designates being the last or final in a series, such as objects or events. In LXX, ἔσχατος renders אחרית ("last, end, future") and, also, signifies completion in the sense of the last thing in time. See LN, 610; also, TDNT, "ἔσχατος".

[39] For OT eschatology in general, see Donald E. Gowan, *Eschatology in the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (London, GB; New York, NY: T & T Clark International, 2000), 1–3 and 121–29; for eschatology more Israel-oriented, see David C. Mitchell, *Message of the Psalter: An Eschatological Programme in the Book of Psalms* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 297–303.

glorification of the saints or the consummation of the rule of Christ."[40] In light of this understanding, the study of the future is of foremost importance, while the present and the past are toned down and subordinated to it. However, the typological correspondences and the textual parallels between the protological accounts in the opening pages of the Bible and its closing eschatological chapters are significant and striking. Therefore, the foundations that underpin eschatology are much deeper and encompass a wide array of themes that are related to the continuation and completion of God's purposes that were stalled by Adam. In Boccaccini's words, the "eschaton is a remedy to what happened in the past, a reversal of past events, the restoration of the lost order."[41] Consequently, to be properly understood, eschatology must include protology.

Protology and Eschatology

Sailhamer writes that the beginning (בראשית) in Genesis 1:

> marks the starting point of a specific duration, as in "the beginning of the year" (Dt. 11:12). The end of a specific period is marked by its antonym, "the end," as in "the end of the year" (Dt. 11:12). In opening the account of Creation with the phrase "in the beginning," the author has marked Creation as the starting point of a period of time.[42]

Therefore, the beginning indicates the commencement of the history of creation and everything it involves. To indicate the start with the choice of word that is frequently accompanied with its antonym, אחרית indicates the anticipation of the culmination of history at the "end of time." The prophetic words of Isaiah (Isa. 65:17) and the concluding vision at the end of the scriptural canon

[40] Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, rep. ed. (Edinburgh, GB: Banner of Truth, 1998), 665. Also Albert Hogeterp, *Expectations of the End: A Comparative Traditio-Historical Study of Eschatological, Apocalyptic and Messianic Ideas in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament* (Leiden, NL; Boston, MA: Brill, 2009), 2–3.

[41] Gabriele Boccaccini, "Protology and Eschatology in the Enochic Traditions," in *Eschatology in Antiquity: Forms and Functions*, ed. Hilary Marlow, Karla Pollmann, and Helen Van Noorden (Abingdon, GB; New York, NY: Routledge, 2021), 171.

[42] John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 83–84.

in Revelation (Rev. 21:1) illustrate the essential understanding of the relatedness of protology and eschatology that the Bible writers shared.[43]

From the standard point of view espoused by systematic theology, protology and eschatology are still seen as two contrasted fields that are concerned with the opposite ends of history and have different concerns and emphases.[44] However, the realization that Genesis themes, motifs, and symbols are embroiled in the rich eschatological tapestry of the Book of Revelation has prompted biblical scholars to investigate the nature of this consanguinity, starting with Gunkel[45] and Westermann[46] at the beginning of the twentieth century. Unfortunately, as Gage observes, these early attempts were not able to present satisfactory results due to the "neglect of foundational studies in biblical protology"[47] that would uphold a comprehensive scriptural eschatology.

However, the problem was much deeper, and besides the diachronic understanding of the biblical text, it involved important hermeneutical issues. Therefore, the introduction of modern literary analysis and narrative criticism of Scripture in the second half of the last century, as

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[43] The idea of an intrinsic relationship between the beginning and the end is not unique to the Book of Revelation. There are many references dispersed throughout the Bible that express this concept in explicit terms. Thus, Isaiah extends the exhortation to remember the "first things" (MT ראשית, LXX τὰ πρότερα), since it contains declaration of the "last things" (MT אחרית, LXX τὰ ἔσχατα) that points to the fulfillment of His will (Isa. 46:9–10). The same concept is observable in some of the Qumran writings, particularly in 4Q180 (*The Ages of Creation*) which follows the history of man from the creation to eschaton. See J. Randall Price, "The Eschatology of the Dead Sea Scrolls," *EA* 2, no. 2 (2016): 9–10. In the Gospels, Jesus warns that the coming of the Messiah will coincide in its characteristics with the days of Noah (Matt. 24:37). Likewise, Peter compares the final judgment to the Flood (2 Pet. 3:6–7). The same awareness of the relationship between the first and last things can also be found in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, and, remarkably, it is seen as indispensable to divine creative activity. Thus, Barnabas writes, "Ἰδού, ποιῶ τὰ ἔσχατα ὡς τὰ πρῶτα" (*Barn* 6:13). It was Gunkel who drew attention to the implicit (2 Pet. 3:6–7) and explicit (Matt. 24:37 || Luke 17:26) relationship between the first and the last things. Hermann Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit: Eine relgionsgeschichtliche Untersushung uber Gen 1 und Ap Joh 12* (Gottingen, D: Vandenhoed und Ruprecht, 1985), 369.

[44] Fesko, *Last Things First*, 21–34.

[45] Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos*, 396.

[46] Claus Westermann, *Beginning and End in the Bible* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1972), passim.

[47] Gage, *Gospel of Genesis*, 7–8.

opposed to the old literary analytical approach, resonated with the canonical approach[48] and has offered invaluable insights into how the biblical narrative works.

The growing awareness of the early apostolic exegetical sensibilities, primarily the emphasis on typological interpretation,[49] in conjunction with the modern literary analysis of the Scriptures,[50] has encouraged the latest generation of biblical scholars even more to revisit the relationship between protology and eschatology. In recent times, Gage, Beale, Alexander,[51] and many others have provided studies that contribute to this area of research. Thus, Beale makes a quite remarkable statement in his essay on the NT eschatological concepts:

> Eschatology is protology, which means that the goal of all redemptive history is to return to the primal condition of creation from which mankind fell and then go beyond it to a more heightened state, which the first creation did not reach. The goal of returning to the primal state of creation in an escalated new creation is the engine which runs the entire eschatological program.[52]

As it can be seen in his recent book on New Testament theology, Beale does not base this position on the simple tautology between Genesis 1–3 and Revelation 21–22, but on the whole Old Testament message that is anticipatory of the coming of another Adam.[53]

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[48] See Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press,1979), passim.

[49] Koptak summarizes the results of the scholarly research in this area; see Paul E. Koptak, *DTIB*, "Intertextuality."

[50] Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), chap. 3, Kindle; Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994); Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985); Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990); passim.

[51] Gregory K. Beale and Mitchell Kim, *God Dwells Among Us: Expanding Eden to the Ends of the Earth* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2014); T. Desmond Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2009).

[52] Gregory K. Beale, "The Eschatological Conception of New Testament Theology," in *The Reader Must Understand: Eschatology in Bible and Theology*, ed. Kent E. Brower and Mark W. Elliot (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013), 11–44.

[53] Gregory K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 115.

Fesko, likewise, in his short study *Last Things First*, rightly points to the problem of interpretation as the main cause for the failure to see and/or to neglect the protological nature of Genesis 1–3. Thus, he suggests a canonical approach and Christology as the interpretative keys for the Genesis narrative.[54] This method leads to the clear conclusion that protology and eschatology are closely related.[55]

Creation

Creation[56] account starts with a bold statement that God is the sole author of the entire universe. The expression "the heavens and the earth" in Genesis 1:1 is a merism that stands for the whole cosmos, where the elements "the heavens" and "the earth" individually represent synecdoches that stand for all that is in them. Creation is not described as a magical singular event but as a sequential creative process in which the elements of order are introduced through several generative steps. Therefore, creation is a process that calls the universe into being and out of the primordial chaos and emptiness and brings into existence an orderly, functional, and purposeful world, which is to serve God's aims and be to His pleasure. The movement from darkness, desolation, and lifelessness as undesirable toward life, habitability, and light as desired

[54] Fesko, *Last Things First*, 29–31.

[55] Fesko maintains that Genesis 1–11 is theological/religious, selectively historical, and not ontological but protological in nature. He defines and explains protology by pointing to the difference between systematic theology (with scope on the doctrine of creation) as ontological and protology (with scope on redemptive history) as typological in nature. So, systematic theology, which he views as a narrow category, is focused on the origins in contrast to protology, a broader category within the field of biblical theology that is focused on significance. However, protology enables the consideration of both systematic theology (ontology) and biblical theology (redemptive history), thereby bringing the two fields together. Ibid., 31–34.

[56] Creation is a free and non-necessitated act of God's sovereign will by which He calls new things inanimate and animate into being. The Hebrew verb ברא ("to create, consume food, cut") is usually understood to mean a unique creation event that introduces something new or makes something new of already existing elements. The more recent works emphasize that its primary meaning is to *separate*.[56] In *Qal* form is used exclusively for divine relative activity. The text of Genesis 1–2 clearly demonstrates that it is used in conjunction with synonyms, such as עשה ("to make") and יצר ("to shape").[56] However, itself ברא underlines the unparalleled divine act, see DBLSD, *Hebrew (Old Testament)*); also, Ellen Van Wolde and Robert Rezetko, "Semantics and the Semantics of Br': A Rejoinder to the Arguments Advanced by B. Becking and M. Korpel," *JHS* 11 (2011): 9–22.

and intended will prove to be an enduring framework and direction of divine activity. The prevalent theological subjects and themes that are introduced in the creation account, such as God, Man, Sin, Judgment, Messiah, and Salvation/Redemption, extend through the whole Bible. They are always expressed in the same or similar typological terms, showing that the foundational issues as well as their solutions remain unchanged.

Methodology

This study will focus only on a limited array of themes and concepts related to the city in selected ANE literature, which are in some way also observable in the Bible, such as city, temple, king, and man, in order to better elucidate the biblical views. Specific inquisitive attention will be paid to the ANE mythopoetic narratives with protological and eschatological content in order to determine the ideas asserted in them and compare them with the related biblical passages. Thus, the methodology of this research will be confined to a qualified literary and textual analysis of various writings[57] and a careful exposition of their content based on secondary sources.

A structured overview of the basic ideas that define the dynamics of interaction between the gods, the city, the temple, and kingship, evident in the primary ANE cultures, is intended to provide the context that sets a reference framework necessary to facilitate a proper understanding and comparison of the concepts related to the city in the ANE literature and the Bible. It is evident that there are some common concerns and shared motifs in the ANE conceptual world and the Bible. Yet, the careful scrutiny of every discourse surrounding individual concepts

[57] The literary analysis will pay attention to the genre and style, characters, dialogue, figurative language, plot, settings, theme, and structure of the passages under investigation. Textual analysis will closely read the text and examine its content to determine its meaning, analyze selected topics, and aggregate the concordance of ideas. Thus, a basis for comparison and contrast will be provided. Likewise, it will pay close attention to the sequence of the narratives, their situation, cultural settings, the presence and/or absence of emphases, and the way they impact the meaning of the text.

makes it plain that there are essential differences between the ANE and the biblical worldviews. The fundamental contrasts, undoubtedly, sprout from theistic views, primarily polytheism versus monotheism, and ensuing cosmologies, ethics, and moral values that bear directly on the place, role, and destiny of humanity. So, the context informs us that the ANE complex vertical cosmology projects man's place and role in this life (the city) and determines his final destiny in spatial terms (the city, the Netherworld). The biblical approach, however, defines man's life based on his relatedness to the divine, which in turn determines his destiny primarily in temporal (eschatology) and then in spatial (new earth, the New Jerusalem) terms. This inquiry will pay close attention to these distinct ANE and biblical aspects and perspectives.

The parts of the inquiry focused on the texts of the Bible will be, likewise, mindful of their overall context and literary elements. The analysis of the biblical protology and eschatology will pay close attention to the macro and micro structures of the texts, as well as thematic, typological, lexical links, and scriptural allusions.[58] In particular, it will explore the connections between the Genesis and Revelation passages related to the first and last cities in the Scriptures.[59] Exegesis will, naturally, be applied to the smaller literary units as needed, such as pericopes and individual verses, and incorporated into the larger body of analysis. Finally, the biblical passages and their content and ideas will be contrasted with their counterparts in the ANE literature, and descriptive and critical comparison will be applied.

The basic assumption of this inquiry is that the Bible in its present canonical form represents the unique divine revelatory and historical message received and recorded by the

[58] Intertextual (exegesis that involves references from different biblical books and/or extrabiblical literature) as well as intratextual (exegesis within a particular book and/or books by the same author) analysis will be employed. The other Bible related sources will be referred to as needed.

[59] Such are Enoch and Babylon the Great (Genesis 4 and 10–11 || Revelation 17–18) and their contrast to the Garden in Eden and the city of God (Genesis 2–3 || Revelation 21–22).

believing community, and that it contains a unified and coherent, although complex theological message. Therefore, the approach to the biblical text will be synchronic and synthetic.

Structure

The general organization of the first four chapters focused on the ANE sources will follow the uniform pattern of thematic subdivisions, such as (a) a suitable introduction to the city in particular literature, (b) a survey, exposition, and analysis of selected texts, and (c) a brief summary of findings, their analysis, and concluding thoughts. Some basic comparisons between different ANE traditions will be employed. The chapters dealing with the Bible will (a) follow the progress of the themes related to the city in their literary settings; (b) survey, expound, and analyze appropriate narrative units and, in the process, compare their contents, specific conceptual points, and theological emphases in light of their ANE counterparts; and (c) conclude with a brief summary of findings and offer some preliminary conclusions. The final synthesis of the findings will constitute the final chapter.

Chapters one through four will explore the city through Mesopotamian, Syrian, Anatolian, Canaanite, and Egyptian experiences as they reverberate in selected written sources. The primary focus will be on the assessment of various theological points and ideologies in accounts that are relevant to cosmology, theogony, cosmogony, anthropogony, and eschatology as they relate to the city and its interaction with gods, the king, and the temple.

Chapter five will turn to the Bible, specifically to the primeval history in Genesis 1–11. Particular attention will be paid to the exegesis and exposition of distinctive elements of cosmology, cosmogony, and anthropogony as they are related to the city in Genesis 1–2, Genesis 4–6, and Genesis 10–11. These elements will be compared to ANE concepts and beliefs.

Chapter six explores some basic ideas that constitute the bridge between the biblical

views on the beginning and the end. Concise yet adequate attention will be given to the theological foundations underpinning the essential relatedness and coordination of protology and eschatology. Therefore, this chapter connects Chapters 5 and 7.

Chapter seven explores the relationship between protology and eschatology in the Book of Revelation by observing the conveyance and development of several key elements related to the city that commenced in protology. Thus, the common themes and motifs that characterize and link together Genesis 1–11 and Revelation 17–22, as well as their structures, are addressed. This will provide a platform for the final comparison of the biblical and ANE ideas about the city.

The last chapter will offer a synthesis of the research results of the previous chapters and concluding thoughts with emphasis on (a) the convergence and divergence of ideas on city in the ANE literature and the Bible; (b) the layout and subsequent development of theological themes and motifs related to city in protology and their culmination in eschatology; (c) the continuity of basic theological premises that characterize the tale of city in biblical protology and eschatology; and (d) the implications that arise from the intersection of theological ideas related to the cities, human and divine, in light of divine intentions expressed in creation and new creation accounts.

Delimitations

Only a limited number of themes and motifs that are viewed as particularly important for the purpose of this research are presently taken into consideration. In this regard, neither the texts under the scope nor the expositional and exegetical attentiveness dedicated to them are claimed to be exhaustive, but exemplary and supplemental in an ongoing discovery. Thus, the hope is that this work will encourage further research in the area of biblical studies and theological discussion related to the city in the Bible.

Chapter 2: The City in Mesopotamian Literature

Mesopotamia was the oldest, the most urbanized, and the most culturally influential region of the ANE world, apart from Egypt. The purpose of this chapter is to do a limited literary analysis of selected Mesopotamian writings in order to: (a) determine the oldest and major ideas related to the city in the Sumerian texts; and (b) determine their transmission and transformation through various subsequent Mesopotamian cultures. In the process, following the chronological order, Sumerian Old and New, Akkadian, Babylonian, Kassite, and Neo-Babylonian literary works, such as the writings of Berossus, will be examined. The primary focus will be on the assessment of various theological and ideological points that illuminate relations between the city and the gods, the temple, kingship, and man in cosmogony, cosmology, and, consequently, eschatology. Since the ANE world did not function outside the religious worldview, the interplay between these five subjects will be given within the framework of religion. The intention of this chapter is to prepare some major comparative points that would be succinctly contrasted with other contemporary ANE cultures and, to a greater extent, with the biblical protology.

The City in Mesopotamia

The Ancient Near East encompasses an immense expanse that stretches from the Levant in the west to the Hindus Valley in the east and from Anatolia in the north to Egypt in the south.[1] Mesopotamia is a historical and geographical region within the larger ANE world situated around the Euphrates and Tigris rivers and their tributaries, with the Persian Gulf in the southeast.

The Origin of Cities in Mesopotamia

The oldest ANE settlements regarded as proto-cities are found in the areas of the Levant

[1] On the geography of the Near East, see Mario Liverani, *The Ancient Near East: History, Society and Economy* (London, UK; New York, NY: Routledge, 2014), 17–22; William H. Jr. Stiebing and Susan N. Helft, *Ancient Near Eastern History and Culture*, 3rd ed. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017), 1–2.

and Anatolia;[2] yet the appearance of the actual cities can be traced to northern Syria (4200–3400 BC),[3] albeit this phase was abortive. However, the same trends continued undisturbed and with great success in the southernmost part of Mesopotamia, known as Sumer. There, they culminated in the complete urbanization of the region and led to the emergence of the early city-states.

The establishment and growth of the settlements in southern Mesopotamia went through several distinctive phases, such as the Ubaid[4] culture and its successive offshoots.[5] The development tangent was directly related to the peculiarities of nature and the harsh climate that required the planned cooperative and hydraulic-based economy.[6] This approach[7] proved to be highly successful and fomented progress in all aspects of life.[8] Very soon, the settlements grew into cities, which skirted the temples that were entrusted with steering human effort and distributing its outcomes. Consequently, this experience left a deep imprint in the collective memory of the inhabitants of Lower Mesopotamia. In turn, this experience shaped their cosmogony, cosmology, and, ultimately, religion. The successive waves of primarily Semitic tribes that migrated to the region established themselves as the continuators of the Sumero-

[2] They never achieved the level of full urbanization. See William W. Hallo, *Origins: The Ancient Near Eastern Background of Some Modern Western Institutions* (Leiden, NL; New York, NY: Brill, 1996), 1.

[3] Bertille Lyonnet, "Who Lived in the Third-Millennium 'Round Cities' of Northern Syria?", in *Nomads, Tribes, and the State in the Ancient Near East: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Jeffrey Szuchman (Chicago, IL: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2009), 179.

[4] Most notably Eridu I. Max E. L. Mallowan, "The Development of Cities from Al-'Ubaid to the End of Uruk 5," in Prolegomena and Prehistory of vol. 1, pt. 1 *The Cambridge Ancient History*, ed. I. E. S. Edwards, C. J. Gadd, and N. G. L. Hammond, 3rd ed. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 327.

[5] Robert McC. Adams, *Heartland of Cities: Surveys of Ancient Settlement and Land Use on the Central Floodplain of the Euphrates* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 54–55.

[6] Liverani, *Ancient Near East*, 65.

[7] Karl W. Butzer, "Physical Conditions in Eastern Europe, Western Asia and Egypt Before the Period of Agricultural and Urban Settlement," in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, ed. I. E. S. Edwards, C. J. Gadd, and N. G. L. Hammond, 3rd ed., vol. 1, Part 1: Prolegomena and Prehistory (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 60.

[8] Rosemary Ellison, "Some Thoughts on the Diet of Mesopotamia from c. 3000-600 B.C.," *Iraq* 45, no. 1 (1983): 146–50.

Akkadian civilization. They built on the existing cultural and religious substratum, which they modified and enriched, and spread its influence beyond the boundaries of Mesopotamia.[9]

City, Writing, and Literature in Mesopotamia

Thus, the emergence of writing happened sometimes during the Uruk period (LC–EBI) and coincided with the emergence of the fully developed city.[10] The earliest writings appeared in Sumerian as simple lexical lists and receipts of goods made by the temple scribes.[11] The same trends continued through the Late Uruk era to the Early Dynastic Period (2900–2350 BC)[12] with the ED epoch being referred to as the pinnacle of urbanization of the whole of Mesopotamia[13] and the golden age of the autonomous city-states in the region.[14] These small domains were multi-tiered,[15] loosely confederate with religion as the primary amalgamative factor, agglomerated in cooperative leagues, and

[9] See Robert McC. Adams, *Heartland of Cities: Surveys of Ancient Settlement and Land Use on the Central Floodplain of the Euphrates* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1981); Rosemary Ellison, "Some Thoughts on the Diet of Mesopotamia from c. 3000-600 B.C.," *Iraq* 45, no. 1 (1983): 146–150; Clemens D. Reichel, "Excavations at Hamoukar Syria," *OI*, no. 211 (Fall 2011): 3–9; Mason Hammond, *The City in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972).

[10] Frick, *City in Ancient Israel*, 173; Hammond, *City in the Ancient World*, 36.

[11] See Georges Roux, *Ancient Iraq*, 3rd ed. (London, GB: Penguin Books, 1993), 80–84.

[12] Max E. L. Mallowan, "The Early Dynastic Period in Mesopotamia," in Early History of the Middle East of vol. 1, pt. 2 *The Cambridge Ancient History*, ed. Iorwerth E. S. Edwards, Cyril J. Gadd, and Nicholas G. L. Hammond, 3rd ed., (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1971), passim.

[13] For the specifics of these developments, see Roux, *Ancient Iraq*, 125; Stiebing and Helft, *Ancient Near Eastern History*, 48–52; Hans J. Nissen, *The Early History of the Ancient Near East, 9000–2000 B.C.*, trans. Elizabeth Lutzeier (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 129–64; Steven J. Garfinkle, "Ancient Near Eastern City-States," in *The Oxford Handbook of the State in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean*, ed. Peter Fibiger Bang and Walter Scheidel, rep. ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), 103.

[14] On democratic governing institutions and traces in literature, see Jacobsen, *Primitive Democracy*, passim.; Stiebing and Helf, *Ancient Near Eastern History* t, 48–52; Samuel N. Kramer, *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 74; Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature* (Chicago, IL: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1978), 218; Matthew Martin III and Daniel C. Snell, "Democracy and Freedom," in *A Companion to the Ancient Near East*, ed. Daniel C. Snell (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005), 397–398. On city fortifications, see Elizabeth C. Stone, "The Development of Cities in Ancient Mesopotamia," in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, ed. Jack M. Sasson, vol. 1 (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1995), 240.

[15] Dominique Charpin, "The History of Ancient Mesopotamia: An Overview," in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, ed. Jack M. Sasson, vol. 2 (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1994), 809.

within a non-centralized political environment.[16]

From c. 2700 BC and onward, more complex and event-related texts started appearing.[17] The first literary period, based on language and socio-political characteristics, is Old Sumerian[18] (ED III period, 2600–2350 BC).[19] However, the use and support of Sumerian script and language continued with the Akkadian kings and the later empires.[20] In time, Akkadian[21] language became more dominant[22] and prevalent[23] especially in wider areas of Mesopotamia and Syria populated with the Semites. The Amorites and the latter nations adopted Sumerian culture and language almost entirely and, consequently, integrated them into the administration, cult,[24] and literature.[25]

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[16] Jane R. McIntosh, *Ancient Mesopotamia: New Perspectives* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2005), 175.

[17] On the scarcity of texts, see Aage Westenholz, "The Sumerian City-State," in *A Comparative Study of Six City-State Cultures*, ed. Mogens H. Hansen (Copenhagen, DK: Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters, 2002), 23–24. On dating, inclusion, and importance of accurate preservation of some OS material, see William W. Hallo, *Toward a History of Sumerian Literature*, in *Sumerological Studies in Honor of Thorkild Jacobsen on His Seventieth Birthday, June 7, 1974*, ed. Stephen Lieberman (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1975), 183–196; Michele R. Salzman and Marvin A. Sweeney, eds., *The Cambridge History of Religions in the Ancient World*, vol. I: From the Bronze Age to the Hellenistic Age (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 33; Liverani, *Ancient Near East*, 195; Mario Liverani, *Uruk: The First City* (London, UK; Oakville, CT: Equinox Publishing, 2006), 12.

[18] The oldest documents unearthed so far are *The Kesh Temple Hymn*, *The Proverbs of Shurrupak* , and *The Barton Cylinder*. Tawny L. Holm, "Literature," in *A Companion to the Ancient Near East*, ed. Daniel C. Snell (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005), 253.

[19] On the other hand, the literature of the Post-Sargonic period is designated by scholars as Neo-Sumerian (2200–1900 BC) and has a broader scope than OS. It adds genres such as poems, letters, prayers, lullabies, love songs, royal hymns, and disputes to the already existing corpus. For the Sumerian literature timetable, see Hallo, *Toward a History of Sumerian Literature*, 197.

[20] On the contribution of Enheduana, see Hallo. Ibid., 185–86.

[21] On political changes introduced by the Akkadians and the disappearance of primitive democracy and the rise of kingship, see Westenholz, *Sumerian City-State*, 36–39; Charpin, *History of Ancient Mesopotamia*, 810; Nissen, *Early History*, 165–98.; Gojko Barjamović, "Mesopotamian Empires," in *The Oxford Handbook of the State in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean*, ed. Peter Fibiger Bang and Walter Scheidel, rep. ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), 130.

[22] On Akkadian language discussion, see Jean Bottero, "Religion and Reasoning in Mesopotamia," in *Ancestor of the West: Writing, Reasoning, and Religion in Mesopotamia, Elam, and Greece*, trans. Teresa Lavender Fagan (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 9. Likewise, Roux, *Ancient Iraq*, 150–52.

[23] On the dominance of the Akkadians, see Nissen, *Early History*, 165–98; Martin III and Snell, *Democracy and Freedom*, 398; Westenholz, *Sumerian City-State*, 36.

[24] Roux, *Ancient Iraq*, 182; Charpin, *History of Ancient Mesopotamia*, 809; Kramer, *Sumerians*, 169–70; Hallo, *Toward a History of Sumerian Literature*, 198–99; also, William W. Hallo, "On the Antiquity of Sumerian Literature," in *The World's Oldest Literature: Studies in Sumerian Belles-Lettres* (Leiden, NL; Boston, MA: Brill, 2009), 149–50 and 197.; Wilfred G. Lambert, "Old Testament Mythology in Its Ancient Near Eastern Context," in

Defining City within Its Mesopotamian Context

The concept of city was already present and clearly understood by the Sumerians as connoting belonging and, consequently, safety.[26] Although it may not be immediately obvious or possible to deduce from etymology that security is embedded in the meaning of the various available terms, Sumerian and Akkadian literature is replete with the idea of protection, which is directly related to the city fortifications.[27]

Nicholas Postgate properly points out that a Mesopotamian city is a category determined by its relative position within a hierarchy of settlements, which is based on function.[28] The foremost priority is put on a city's role as a cultic center; then, on its economic and political significance, as were the cases of Nippur and Eridu.[29] Thus, the city core was a temple complex that consisted of the central monumental sanctuary dedicated to the patron deity and the supporting installations, which were encircled by a wall[30] that effectively created the inner or

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Congress Volume: Jerusalem 1986, ed. John A. Emerton (Leiden, NL: Brill, 1988), 129; Kramer, *Sumerians*, 169–70.

[25] See Kramer, *Sumerians*, 169; Ake W. Sjoberg, "The Old Babylonian Eduba," in *Sumerological Studies in Honor of Thorkild Jacobsen on His Seventieth Birthday, June 7, 1974*, ed. Stephen Lieberman (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1975), 160 n.3; Hallo, *Toward a History of Sumerian Literature*, 198; Kramer, *Sumerians*, 166.

[26] For a discussion of the ANE concepts of city, see Hallo, *Ancient Near Eastern Background*, 2–3.

[27] Stephanie Anthonioz, "Cities of Glory and Cities of Pride: Concepts, Gender, and Images of Cities in Mesopotamia and in Ancient Israel," in *Memory and the City in Ancient Israel*, ed. Diana V. Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2014), 23.

[28] Nicholas Postgate, *Early Mesopotamia: Society and Economy at the Dawn of History* (New York: Routledge, 1994), chap. 2, Kindle.

[29] Consequently, the architectural elements were usual but not exclusive indicators of a settlement's function. The same can be said of their layout, which reflected cosmological ideas and was, therefore, highly symbolic. Mirko Novak, "Phenomenon of Residential Cities and City Foundations in the Ancient Near East," in *Approaching Monumentality in Archaeology*, ed. James F. Osborne, rep. ed. (New York, NY: State University of New York Press, 2015), 312. On the layout of the early cities, see Charles K. Maisels, *The Archaeology of Politics and Power: Where, When and Why the First States Formed* (Oxford, GB; Havertown, PA: Oxbow Books, 2010), 148.

[30] Cyril J. Gadd, "The Cities of Babylonia," in Early History of the Middle East, vol. 1, pt. 1 of *The Cambridge Ancient History*, ed. Iorwerth E. S. Edwards, Cyril J. Gadd, and Nicholas G. L. Hammond, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 270.

sacred city.[31] So, the temple was the axis around which the cities formed and the symbol of their unity, as well as the focal point of the cultic, administrative, and economic activities of their communities. The overall importance of the temple was such that at certain times and places, the rest of the city did not seem much more than an appendix to it, as was the case of Nippur. Yet, despite the greatness of the temple's role, the Mesopotamian "city-state was not a *tempelstadt*,"[32] as the present scholarly consensus based on historical dynamics maintains. However, neither a city was without a temple, nor was a temple without a city.

As the temple was the sign and symbol of the city's religious identity, the city wall was the symbol of its political designation.[33] So, the fortifications were built not only for defensive purposes but also to signify "the city's power and prestige, and they remained a vital element of a city's design, while their destruction by enemies symbolized the city's loss of autonomy and vitality."[34] And though a walled enclosure was not a prerequisite, the fortifications[35] became the earmark of the urban centers.[36] Consequently, city was not an abstraction but a concrete physical reality with clearly defined properties that contained a particular substance. This encased environment provided all elements that were deemed important: the center of cult and culture, the presence of commerce and trade, as well as the well-established redistributive economy and

[31] See A. Leo Oppenheim and Erica Reiner, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization*, rev. ed. (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), 131.

[32] Ibid., 147–48. The italics are mine.

[33] Postgate, *Early Mesopotamia*, chap. 4, Kindle.

[34] McIntosh, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 150.

[35] Oppenheim and Reiner, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 127.

[36] Thus, Mieroop avoids etymology and lexical study in his attempt to define the city and suggests a purely descriptive resolution by appealing to the common urban pattern that pervaded the region and that a Mesopotamian would recognize as the city proper. Starting from the outskirts of the suburb and moving toward the center, he encounters the inner city on higher ground that has defensive walls with towers, massive gates, palaces and temples, streets, residential areas, workshops, open areas, and burial places. Mieroop, *Ancient Mesopotamian City*, 72–83.

political structures.[37] From this perspective, the city offered everything that a person would need and look for, such as physical and material security, relative prosperity, order under a stable rule, and divine favor and protection.[38] Most Mesopotamians were probably born, lived, and died without ever stepping outside the boundaries of their city. A beautiful description of a happy and prosperous city can be found in the OB version of *The Cursing of Agade* lament (Lines 10–39).[39]

Towns were the client cities of the capitals and, as such, had all the appropriate amenities and facilities of the cities (the temple for the patron deity, the defensive wall, the public square, and the central authority). However, they did not have any role within the central administration of the domain, which was exclusively in the hands of the capitals. The local temple head or director, *sanga*, was in charge of the town and directly responsible to the ruler of the city-state. Towns and villages clustered around the city with which they were symbiotically related and which they looked at as their religious, economic, and administrative axis.[40]

On the other hand, a village was only a source of manpower, raw materials, and food for the towns and cities. It did not have patron deities, and it was not protected by a wall.[41] A council of elders was in charge of the village, just as in the city. However, this system was so pervasive, persistent, and unchangeable that even the divine sphere was imagined to follow the same pattern.[42]

Throughout the 3rd and early in 2nd millennia BC, there was no distinction between the

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[37] Garfinkle essentially concurs with Mieroop and affirms his conclusions. See Garfinkle, *Ancient Near Eastern City-States*, 96.

[38] Hammond, *City in the Ancient World*, 38.

[39] ETCSL.2.1.5.

[40] At times a client city could become a capital, and/or that capitals would become towns or simply be reduced to cultic and pilgrimage centers with not much more than a temple and its attendants.

[41] Liverani, *Ancient Near East*, 19 and 62.

[42] Westenholz, *Sumerian City-State*, 27–28.

city and the state. The capital cities were the centers of the lands named by them, and/or, when the territorial kingdoms became established, they were the headquarters of the provinces.[43] So, the "Mesopotamian known to us today was a citizen, a resident of one of these many ancient towns."[44] The dwellers of the open country were thought of as uncivilized barbarians and were despised,[45] as the end of *The Marriage of Martu* illustrates (Lines 127–141).[46]

The City in Cosmology

Mesopotamian cosmology is very complex and based on keen observation of nature and its processes. It is expressed in myths, where it is garbed up in allegory that expresses analogies in a culturally appropriate language.[47] Although there are some important differences that distinguish Sumerian and Akkadian, or generally speaking, Sumerian and later Semitic cosmological ideas, their major aspects overlap to a considerable degree. Thus, (a) the preexisting sea generates (b) the cosmic mountain, which consists of (c) heaven (An) and earth (Ki) that together beget (d) air (Enlil), who creates the world through the acts of separation of the cosmic elements, thereby laying the foundation for the "organization of the universe, the creation of man, and the establishment of civilization."[48] The vertical perspective of the created universe is seen as multilayered, consisting of celestial, terrestrial, and chthonian realms and their subdivisions. The origin, place, and role of the city are set within this larger paradigm.[49]

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[43] William W. Hallo, "Antediluvian Cities," *JCS* 23, no. 3 (1971): 60.

[44] Mieroop, *Ancient Mesopotamian City*, 2–3.

[45] Kramer, *Sumerians*, 164.

[46] ETCSL 1.7.1.

[47] Richard E. Averbeck, "The Third Millennium Temple War and Peace in History and Religion," in *Krieg Und Frieden: 52e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale / International Congress of Assyriology and Near Eastern Archaeology, Munster, 17.–21.*, ed. Reinhard Dittmann et al. (Münster, D: Ugarit Verlag, 2014), 45.

[48] Samuel N. Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology: A Study of Spiritual and Literary Achievement in the Third Millennium B. C.* (Philadelphia, PA: The American Philosophical Society, 1944), 39–41.

[49] As Mieroop properly observes, the "cosmogonic myths do not focus on the creation of natural phenomena and man's environment, but on the organization of that environment, especially the establishment of

Furthermore, the city itself defines the elements that are within its sphere and horizon; moreover, the city is the axial point of the horizontal cosmic perspective.

The topography of the city and the world around it was seen in the concentric circles. In the center was *uru*, the inner city, with its suburbs as the *axis mundi*. Outside of the subsidiary wall, or the suburb outskirts, was the next circle called *si*, the farmed land with fields, orchards, and gardens. The third circle was *edin*, an uncultivated steppe with pastures for sheep, goats, cows, and donkeys. Beyond this circle was *lil*, the open wilderness that was considered the end of civilization, a chaotic world full of danger and evil inhabited by brute savages and cannibals. No wonder that the rulers of Mesopotamia saw their cities as the center of the world and the temples of their gods as the heart of the city.[50]

Still, the city was more than just people, buildings, walls, and institutions. It was a divine residence and estate, a dearly beloved creation of the gods, and a place to which they were destined. More than anything, the city was a habitat where people and gods lived together in a mutually dependent and beneficial relationship. Thus, the coveted *mes*, the cultural norms or basic principles of civilized life, were bestowed on the cities of Sumer and Mesopotamia. The gods were their source, their possessors, and their depositors.[51] The goal of this deposition was to make the state of life in Sumer like "the State like Heaven on Earth"[52] and, thereby, secure

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cities for man to live in... with the chaos outside as something to be avoided." Mieroop, *Ancient Mesopotamian City*, 226.

[50] These principles are carefully listed and greatly emphasized in the NS myth *Inanna and Enki: The Transfer of the Arts of Civilization from Eridu to Erech*. Liverani, *Ancient Near East*, 19.

[51] Only a city with *mes* is the measure of civilization, welfare, and prosperity. These "offices" represent institutions and their functions, virtues, and vices, as well as crafts and skills such as "priesthood, godship... shepherdship, kingship." CS, 322.

[52] Herman L. J. Vanstiphout, "Why Did Enki Organize the World?" in *Sumerian Gods and Their Representation*, ed. Irving L. Finkel and Markham J. Geller (Groningen, NL: Styx Publications, 1997), 122 n. 21.

abundance that would make gods remain in Sumer and keep her prosperous.[53] The benefits, though heeding gods and their satisfaction, are, therefore, in their practical effects directed to the people and their well-being. This concept envisions an ideal Sumer marked with peace and happiness, a state that ought to be pursued. However, it should be noted that the "good life on earth, which is taken to be identical to the (idealized) Sumerian way of public life,"[54] is urban life. So, it is clear that for the Sumerian, civilization is not an end to itself but a tool and a way to establish paradise on earth.

Thus, the city was a way of life, a way of thinking, an attitude, and, as the epitome of a properly organized world, a goal for which to strive. The Mesopotamian rulers emphasized that they were born in cities[55] and kept imposing urbanization throughout history until Roman times. A Mesopotamian lived in a city during his or her lifetime; when they died, they went to the eternal "Great City," the netherworld.

The City and Religion in Mesopotamia

Religion was the central facet of Sumerian life that permeated all aspects of their society.[56] Thus, they were closely associated with the temple and, in turn, with the economy and politics.[57] Even kingship, which had its origin in the secular institution of the tribal democracy, had strong ties with the cult and the shrine. However, the locus of Sumerian life was the city, and, therefore, religion was "thoroughly urban and civilized."[58] The same can be said of all

[53] In the myth *Enki Organizes the World*, Enki uses *mes* to enhance the prosperity of Sumer and her trading partners. His activity is not related to creation but to the arrangement of various already existing elements. This title is preferred by Kramer. See *Sumerian Mythology*, 64–68.

[54] Vanstiphout, *Why Did Enki Organize the World?*, 123 and 130–32.

[55] Mieroop, *Ancient Mesopotamian City*, 33.

[56] Westenholz, *Sumerian City-State*, 24.

[57] Frankfort characterizes it as "theocratic communism." Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 221.

[58] Hammond, *City in the Ancient World*, 45–46.

Mesopotamian successors to the Sumerians.[59]

Sumerian religion is "popular" or "prehistoric"[60] sprouting from oral rituals and cultic traditions that did not rely on written sources.[61] Yet, there are some relevant texts[62] that come mostly from only three fountainheads, which are (1) various literary pieces from Assurbanipal's library at Nineveh and Sumerian tablet stashes at (2) Nippur and (3) Ur.[63] Thus, through literature, the understanding of the place and role of the city remained intact even when historical realities became dismissive of them.

The City and Gods in Mesopotamia

Even early Sumerian theology was well developed and quite particular. Thus, the Sumerians ranked their gods by importance based on their prerogatives and differentiated them as creative and noncreative.[64] Based on this typology, there were four significant deities in the

[59] The Assyrian and Babylonian religions were derivatives of the 3rd millennium BC Mesopotamian religion and tradition. See Tammi J. Schneider, "Assyrian and Babylonian Religions," in *The Cambridge History of Religions in the Ancient World*, ed. Michele R. Salzman and Marvin A. Sweeney, vol. I: From the Bronze Age to the Hellenistic Age (Cambridge, GB; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 78–79.

[60] Meaning, pre-literate; see Jean Bottero, *Religion and Reasoning in Mesopotamia*, 53.

[61] There are traces of both divergent traditions and, also, of the transition of "compositions from the cultic to the literary." Niek Veldhuis, "Sumerian Literature," in *Cultural Repertoire: Structure, Function and Dynamics*, ed. Gillis J. Dorleijn and Herman L. J. Vanstiphout (Dudley, MA: Peeters Publishers, 2003), 32–34.

[62] On the gap between the archaeological finds and the literary parallels, see William W. Hallo, "Sumerian Religion," in *The World's Oldest Literature: Studies in Sumerian Belles-Lettres* (Leiden, NL; Boston, MA: Brill, 2009), 93. Also, Oppenheim and Reiner, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 171–83

[63] Furthermore, the situation is even more perplexing due to the different traditions that existed concurrently. See Stephanie Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others* (Oxford, UK; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998), 278. Hallo and Jacobsen suggest some solid methodology for alleviating these difficulties. See Hallo, *Sumerian Religion*, 94–95; Thorkild Jacobsen, "Ancient Mesopotamian Religion: The Central Concerns," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 107, no. 6 (December 20, 1963): passim. Conservative Sumerian mentality, enhanced by the exact transmission of the old venerated traditions through the written media, ensured the preservation of the core elements of a very old belief system. Robert D. Biggs, "Tablets from Tell Abū Ṣalābīkh, Iraq," in *The Oriental Institute 1971-1972 Annual Report*, ed. George R. Hughes (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago, 1972), 22; also Algaze, 24; Wilfred G. Lambert, "Sumerian Gods: Combining the Evidence of Texts and Art," in *Sumerian Gods and Their Representation*, ed. Irving L. Finkel and Markham J. Geller (Groningen, NL: Styx Publications, 1997), 2.

[64] According to van Dijk, there is no difference between the cosmos and the universe; therefore, there are no cosmic entities but only astral, celestial, and terrestrial entities. See J. J. A. van Dijk, "Le Motif Cosmique Dans La Pensee Sumerienne," *AO*, no. 28 (1964): 1–59.

Sumerian pantheon: An, Enlil, Enki, and the goddess Ninhursaga.[65] Apart from substituting Enlil with their own chief gods, Babylonians and Assyrians "took over from the Sumerians their pantheon and their whole religious organization with its liturgies and incantations."[66]

All the principal gods had their temples in the major Sumerian and/or Mesopotamian cities, which in turn were the ceremonial centers of their cult and worship.[67] But gods were not simply the dwellers; they were the builders, the owners, and the patrons of their respective cities.[68] At the same time, the urban communities identified themselves with their divine sponsors and their corresponding temples. Thus, the interpenetration and the consequent conflation of the agencies between gods and the temples and the cities, which were essentially extensions of the divinities, served as means to manifest the divine in the world.[69]

Unlike the other urban ANE religions that venerated the elements of nature and used them for cultic purposes, in Mesopotamia, the cities were the exclusive residential places of their patron gods and the sole centers of their cultic activities.[70] The temples were the actual "houses"

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[65] Originally, the Ninhursaga, with An and Enlil, comprised the ruling triad that dominated the third millennium BCE. However, her daughter Inanna ("lady of heaven"?), in Akkadian known as Ishtar, the goddess of love and war, gradually became the most prominent female deity. The rest of the pantheon amounted to some four dozen widely recognized and worshiped gods that roughly corresponded to the number of the principal cities in Sumer and Akkad. On the gods of Mesopotamia, see Kramer, *Sumerians*, 285; Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 216; Peeter Espak, "One Possible Interpretation of the Structure of the Early Sumerian Pantheonon," *UA* 72, no. 1 (June 2018): 38; Bottero, *Religion and Reasoning in Mesopotamia*, 55.

[66] Samuel H. Hooke, *Babylonian and Assyrian Religion* (London, GB: Hutchinson's University Library, 1953), 20. This process was so thorough that "almost every aspect of Babylonian and Assyrian culture has been shaped and influenced by Sumerian culture to such an extent that it is difficult to determine what elements in the religion of the Babylonians are of purely Semitic origin." Ibid., 21.

[67] Thus, the center of An's worship was Uruk, Enlil's was Nippur, Enki's Eridu, Ninhursaga's were Kesh and Adab, and later on Marduk's was Babylon, and Ashur's was Ashur. The placement of the temples and their deities is geographically specific and related to the main economic traits of the regions and cities in which the gods resided. See Jacobsen, *Treasures of Darkness*, 25. Many of the minor deities had their temples, shrines, and chapels too in the urban areas; however, usually outside of the inner city, that was reserved for the main temples.

[68] Mieroop, *Ancient Mesopotamian City*, 47–48.

[69] Beate Pongratz-Leisten, "The Animated Temple and Its Agency in the Urban Life of the City in Ancient Mesopotamia *Beate Pongratz-Leisten, NYU, ISAW*," *Religion* 12, no. 8: 638 (2021), 4.

[70] Mieroop, *Ancient Mesopotamian City*, 215. Also, Schneider, *Assyrian and Babylonian Religions*, 75.

that domiciled the images of deities. They were furnished with all necessary amenities, like regular homes, so gods and their families could function in every way as regular human households in a truly anthropomorphic sense.

The priesthood was decentralized, and every person in service of any aspect of the cult or the upkeep of the shrine was considered a priest or a temple official if involved in secular and/or administrative duties.[71] The rites were focused on the temple and, thus, performed primarily within the city.[72]

The City and the Temple in Mesopotamia

The most important building of the Mesopotamian city, the temple, was situated on a platform or terrace and accompanied by a massive tower, or ziggurat.[73] According to Sumerian theology, the temple was the manor house of the god who owned the city.[74] Moreover, the temples were imbued with the essence of gods and represented the individual functions of the deities to which they were dedicated.[75] The city, on the other hand, was (a) the residence and estate of the deity that dwelt in its temple[76] and (b) the source of provision for that deity's needs that was distributed in the temple.[77] Consequently, the relationship between the city and the

[71] Piotr Steinkeller, "Babylonian Priesthood during the Third Millennium BCE: Between Sacred and Profane," *JANER* 19 (2019): 113.

[72] However, some were occasionally acted out outside the city walls but on the city land and within a larger ceremonial context. Examples would include the Sumerian pilgrimages of gods that would span several urban centers or the Babylonian/Assyrian Akitu festival. So, Mesopotamian religion was the religion of the urban dwellers and was thoroughly temple- and city-oriented. See Mieroop, *Ancient Mesopotamian City*, 216.

[73] For a description of the ziggurat and its meaning, see Roux, *Ancient Iraq*, 165.

[74] Kramer, *Sumerians*, 73–74.

[75] Jacobsen, *Treasures of Darkness*, 16.

[76] Sumerian city-states were larger and more complex social, political, economic, and administrative systems than a single city. On the structure of a city-state, see Roux, *Ancient Iraq*, 131.

[77] This interdependence is beautifully illustrated in one of the early Sumerian myths dedicated to a Semitic deity, *The Marriage of Martu*. For the analysis of the relevant lines, see Roux, *Ancient Iraq*, 131–32.

temple was organic.[78] So, the interrelatedness of the city and the temple and the conflation of their agencies resulted in referring to both in the same or similar terms pertinent to cosmology.[79]

Temple as the "Cosmic" Mountain

It was not the building's grandeur or its location *per se* that were determinative factors that set apart the temple. More than anything else, it was the divine presence and the world-stabilizing activity of the gods who dwelled in it,[80] all of which evoked certain context and environment. Indeed, various texts from the ANE world make it clear that the temple was seen as directly connected to the primordial times as one of the first things created. As such, it was perceived as the *terminus a quo* of origination. At the same time, it presented both the replica of the heavenly realities, or *imago mundi*, and the intersection of heaven and earth, thus the *axis mundi* and the point of the contact between divine and human realms. The most frequent symbols related to these concepts were trees and mountains.[81]

Based on the concepts attested by the textual evidence, several attempts to outline the temple typology are of particular interest. The cosmic mountain can be an imposition or a projection of the archetypal Cosmic Mountain on a natural or man-made object, which transforms that object into the cosmic sphere.[82] As "the point where the earth touches the divine sphere," it is sacred due to the presence of gods and divine world-ordering activity and control of

[78] On the conceptual level, this was based on a straight-forward typology. The association between a city and its temple remained even after the abandonment of that city or the diminished role of its temple, as was the case with Eridu, Kesh, and Nippur.

[79] Pongratz-Leisten, *Animated Temple*, 4.

[80] Richard J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1972), 5.

[81] Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York, NY: Harvest, 1959), 32–42 and 53.

[82] Andrzej Wiercinski, "Pyramids and Ziggurats as the Architectonic Representations of the Archetype of the Cosmic Mountain," *Katunob*, no. 10 (1977): 201.

nature that commence there.[83] Also, it can be a presentation or "manifestation of the primordial mound or hillock of creation" that first emerged from the watery chaos.[84]

As the second definition is to a great degree self-evident, the first and second definitions call for additional attention. Thus, the temple was considered to be set in heaven, yet at the same time, it was the very foundation of the earth, as the ancient *Kesh Temple Hymn* indicates.[85] As the touching point between heaven and earth, the temple rises to heaven, competing with it in height while simultaneously reaching Abzu, the under-earth abyss, and also filling or overshadowing the whole universe.[86] Accordingly, the temple is "house... reaching to the heavens... whose foundations are fixed in the *abzu*, whose shade covers all lands!"[87] In this aspect, the temple is, therefore, seen as a tree or a pillar of the world. As such, it is the unifier of the whole world and its embodiment.[88]

The related idea of the mountain employs similar motifs, which are expressed in familiar terms, too.[89] So, in some texts, the temple is referred to as "a pure mountain!"[90] At times, both

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[83] Clifford, *Cosmic Mountain in Canaan*, 7–8.

[84] John M. Lundquist, "The Common Temple Ideology of the Ancient Near East," in *The Temple in Antiquity: Ancient Records and Modern Perspectives*, ed. Truman G. Madsen (Provo, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1984), 53–76.

[85] It is described as a "good house, built in a good location, house Keš... floating in the heavens... like the boat of heaven, the platform of all the lands!" ETCSL 4.80.2. House, *e* in Sumerian, also means a temple. Thus, "house Kesh" means "the Kesh temple."

[86] Francesca Rochberg, "Mesopotamian Cosmology," in *A Companion to the Ancient Near East*, ed. Daniel C. Snell (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005), 317.

[87] The transcendence of the temple is even more noticeable in a slightly different rendering of the same lines. "Great, true temple, reaching the sky, temple, great crown, reaching the sky, temple, rainbow, reaching the sky, temple, whose platform(?) is suspended from the midst of the sky, whose foundation fills the Abzu." See Robert D. Biggs, "An Archaic Sumerian version of the Kesh Temple Hymn from Tell Abu Salabikh," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 61 (1971): 201.

[88] Rochberg, *Mesopotamian Cosmology*, 316–17.

[89] In the epic *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta*, the hero of the story, Enmerkar, beseeches Inanna to help him beautify the temple dedicated to her. On the origin and character of the Enmerkar Cycle, see ESK, 1.

[90] THTO, 282. Significantly, this and the other epic poems reflect very old traditions that are indigenous and based on the reality of building and rebuilding the temples and cities atop the ruble of the old buildings. This practice has created enormous tells (hill-like structures) of great heights that stand out in the Mesopotamian plain,

symbols of a tree and a mountain can be found together, both mentioned in one breath.[91] The view that a temple is a presentation of the primordial hillock is based on perennial and emphatic claims that the temples and/or the elements of the temple complexes are founded on or reach Abzu, the underneath ocean of primordial water. At the same time, they rise up as holy mounds extending to heaven.[92]

City as the "Cosmic" Mountain

The familiar terms, concepts, and metaphors applied to the temple are equally applied to the city; so, Uruk is lauded as the "great mountain."[93] Likewise, Kulab, another great city, is called a "brickwork rising up from the pristine mountain" that "reaches from heaven to earth," while Uruk is "as the pristine mountain... was founded on a day of bliss."[94] Therefore, the city is not only set on a mountain, but it is the mountain that is compared with the mountains of the world; moreover, it is founded in "the pristine" environment on a "day of bliss," which points to

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resembling mountains, thus prompting the association, which eventually translated into a symbol. The kings of the Isin-Larsa period were faithful preservers and continuators of these practices and traditions associated with them, as the inscription on the votive cone of Warad-Sin, king of Larsa, can attest. This short writing is embedded in the foundation of the shrine that he rebuilt and refers to the temple in recognizable terms: "Its head I reared high; like a mountain I did raise." See Albert T. Clay, "YOS 1: Miscellaneous Inscriptions in the Yale Babylonian Collection", in *Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts 1* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1915), 28.

[91] This can be seen in *The Building of Ningirsu's Temple* (Gudea, Cylinders A and B). Thus, the builders "made the house grow as high as the hills, they made it float in the midst of heaven as a cloud... like the ĝišgana tree over the *abzu*... made to lift its head so high as to fill the space between heaven and earth like the hills. "ETCSL 2.1.7. The rest of the account continues to cluster the motifs related to the cosmic mountain concept. Accordingly, it is "high as a great mountain... connecting heaven and earth... reaching up to the skies... up to heaven like a huge mountain and its fearsomeness and radiance have settled upon the Land."

[92] Lundquist, *Common Temple Ideology*, passim. So, *The Kesh Temple Hymn* makes clear that E-kur, the Enlil's temple, is firmly established in Abzu. It says that "house Keš, platform of the Land... whose foundations are fixed in the *abzu*." The building traditions reflect this point by establishing the temple platform deep into the soil and symbolically fastening it with pegs that reach down and connect it to Abzu. Thus, in *The Building of Ningirsu's Temple*, Gudea, describing his undertaking, insists that "its *abzu* foundation pegs, big mooring stakes, he drove into the ground so deep they could take counsel with Enki in the E-engura."

[93] The *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta* epic. ESK, 57. In *The Building of Ningirsu's Temple*, Gudea pursues the task of rebuilding the main temple. As he is heading to the city of Nigin, he refers to it as "the mountain rising from the water." This association cannot be mistaken for a mere poetic depiction. See William W. Hallo, "The Coronation of Ur-Nammu," *JCS* 20, no. 3/4 (1966): 141.

[94] The *Enmerkar and Ensuhgirana* epic ESK, 29.

time at the beginning of creation.[95] Elsewhere, Nippur is addressed in lofty terms as "growing skyward, embracing the heavens... the bond between heaven and earth."[96] And again, one of the hymns says that Nibru's "terrifying splendour extends over heaven and earth;" moreover, it is "shrine Nibru," and its power "reaches to the edges of the uttermost extent of heaven and earth."[97]

So, the city, just like the temple, fills the earth and heaven with its glory, splendor, and power. But it is also a "pillar" that is "rooted in Abzu," which both identify city with the tree of the world and the primordial hillock. Therefore, the well-known terminology and concepts related to the temple are pertinent to the city.[98]

As we already saw above, Nippur (Nibru) is addressed as a "shrine" or, in other words, the city is equaled with the temple. In yet another hymn the same city is explicitly referred to as a primordial temple: "Shrine Nibru, primeval city, where the divine powers are allotted, sweet is your praise!"[99] But the hymn *Enlil in the Ekur*, in a few lines, captures the essence of the city, Nippur, both horizontally and vertically. We learn that "Enlil... built Nibru... the Kiur, the mountain, the pure place... founded it in the Dur-an-ki, in the middle of the four quarters of the

[95] Kulab had originally been an ancient city that later became a famous city-quart of Uruk; An's temple complex was situated there. As the laudation goes, its height reaches to the heaven, thus connecting the two realms, human and divine. Even the whole city of Uruk touches the sky.

[96] The ED period *Zame Hymns*, Robert D. Biggs and Donald P. Hansen, *Inscriptions from Tell Abu Salabikh* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 45. Espak in his dissertation offers a slightly different translation of the same lines with a greater emphasis on Nippur as the unifier of the upper and lower realms: "The city grown together with heaven and earth / which embraces heaven. / Nippur, / the bond of heaven and earth." See Peeter Espak, *God Enki in Sumerian Royal Ideology* (Tartu, EE: Tartu University, 2010), 70 n.132.

[97] Išme-Dagan W, ETCSL 2.5.4.23.

[98] The hymn continues that Nibru is "the pillar... the mooring post of all people," whose powers are "supreme divine powers with which no divine powers can compare" and whose "plans are as if rooted in the *abzu*, endowed with great terrifying splendor;" moreover, it is a "lofty hill that no one can reach. Outstanding, with head high, you reach to the heavens."

[99] Išme-Dagan C, ETCSL 2.5.4.03.

earth. Its soil is the life of the Land, and the life of all the foreign countries."[100] So, Nippur is a divine creation, the capital (Ki-ur) of the world, situated in its center, and a source of life for the country and the foreign lands under her dominion. More importantly, she is a mountain that is the "Bond of Heaven and Earth" (Dur-an-ki) where people gather to worship. Thus, Nippur is "set on the human-divine vertical axis acting as a mediatory space,"[101] which is precisely the function of the temple.

The City and Kingship in Mesopotamia

Ordinary day-to-day affairs of city life seem to be sufficiently addressed by the assembly of elders. However, more complex situations, such as boundary disputes and wars, required a different type of leadership.[102] The same can be said about the digging and maintenance of the irrigation dams and canals, as well as the temple repair and building. These enormous earthworks involved planning and execution that led to the establishment of the office of the city ruler and his eventual apotheosis.[103]

The Sumerian texts present the rulers as divinely appointed to rule god's property in his or her stead and as the shepherds of their people, who were in charge of their well-being.[104] However, kingship was not considered a part of the original creation but a divine addition[105]

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[100] LAS, 323.

[101] Omur Harmansah, "The Cattlepen and the Sheepfold: Cities, Temples, and Pastoral Power in Ancient Mesopotamia," in *Heaven on Earth: Temples, Ritual, and Cosmic Symbolism in the Ancient World*, ed. Deena Ragavan (Chicago, IL: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2013), 378. The interrelatedness of the temple and city can be additionally illustrated by the common practice of addressing a city by a moniker incorporating the word sanctuary/temple and the deity's name. Pongratz-Leisten, *Animated Temple*, 3.

[102] Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 223.

[103] John P. Peters, "Notes and Suggestions on the Early Sumerian Religion and Its Expression," *JAOS* 41 (1921): 135.

[104] Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 237–38.

[105] The introductory lines of the first two major divisions of SKL make profound statements that strongly emphasize this position. "After the kingship descended from heaven (1–39)... After the flood had swept over, and the kingship had descended from heaven (40–94)."

from later times. Likewise, kingship was functionary or non-revocable.[106]

In the beginning, the rulers were likely the high priests of their city god and also served secular purposes.[107] As appointed servants of gods, one of the supreme duties of the rulers was to take good care of the cities and temples by maintaining and repairing them or building new ones. The city and the temple were metaphorically looked at as "the catlepan and the sheepfold," and the task of their upkeep was considered essential for the wellbeing of the people.[108] Since both were originally built by gods, the king's role and duties were, therefore, complementary to those of the divinities.[109] In a sense, the rulers were considered divine replicas or "living gods" and, in many cases, treated accordingly.[110]

Deification of the King

The deification of the Sumerian kings started with Lugalbanda,[111] who was the first Sumerian *lu-gal* to be deified. Even so, the deification of the OS rulers would happen after their death.[112] On the other hand, Naram-Sin, the grandson of Sargon, declared himself "the god of Agade"[113] while he was alive. The rationale for and justification of this practice kept changing

[106] Writing on the phrase from SKL 'kingship had descended from heaven,' Frakfort says that "the phrase indicated that the office, and not the office-holder, was of superhuman origin." Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 297.

[107] Their family members were, similarly, involved in public affairs in various ways, often by being in charge of the temples.

[108] Harmansah, *Cattlepen and the Sheepfold*, 384–85.

[109] Sumer was owned by gods. Human authority within this system was secondary, and it functioned as an extension of divine rule. See Thorkild Jacobsen, "The Cosmos as a State," in *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man* (Chicago, IL; London, UK: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), 185–86.

[110] Roux, *Ancient Iraq*, 133–35.

[111] Lugalbanda (ED II) was followed by Dumuzi and others. See Kramer, *Sumerians*, 45, 49–50, and 251–258. The poem *Love Finds a Way* illustrates the trajectory along which Sumerian religious thought evolved.

[112] William W. Hallo, "Texts, Statues and the Cult of the Divine King," in *Congress Volume: Jerusalem 1986*, ed. John A. Emerton (Leiden, NL: Brill, 1988), 57–58.

[113] Kramer, *Sumerians*, 62; Hallo, *Texts, Statues and the Cult*, 58–59. A couple of centuries later, Shulgi, the greatest ruler of the III Dynasty of Ur, followed the example and exalted himself to divine status, too.

over time, and there were various ideas behind it.[114] On a practical level, deification was a tool for legalizing a king's rule, but it was also his inauguration into the divine family.[115]

However, the idea and practice of the deification of the Akkadian kings during their lifetime[116] caused, as Hallo points out, considerable consternation since, by "raising the king to divine status, the Akkadians threatened that fine balance between the secular and sacred power that the Sumerians had worked out in EDA."[117] The problem was not the elevation of a royal to the status of a deity; the necessary elements that prepared the way for such a practice were already there. But, as Hallo elucidates, "it was presumably essential that, at the least, the 'real' gods be treated like monarchs."[118] So, in order to "restore the balance, the religious establishment as represented by temple and priesthood resorted to an ingenious stratagem: they invested the great gods with royal status!"[119]

The apotheosis of the king had as a consequence the "humanization of the pantheon" both by (a) making gods look like humans in appearance, attitude, behavior, and mode of existence,

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[114] One of them was the ritual of the sacred marriage, a liturgical reenactment of the marriage between Dumuzi and Innana. Kramer, *Sumerians*, 69; Roux, *Ancient Iraq*, 135.

[115] More than anything else, as Vacin observes, it was utilized to turn the king "into a pillar of divine order and thereby also into a *conditio sine qua non* of the transfer of blessings from the divine realm to the earthly sphere." Ludek Vacin, "Tradition and Innovation in Šulgi's Concept of Divine Kingship," in *Tradition and Innovation in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the 57th Rencontre Assyriologique International at Rome, 4-8 July 2011*, ed. Alfonso Archi (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 188.

[116] The Akkadian influence appears decisive in shaping the office of the king as the autocratic and sovereign rule over the whole land by a person that is not anymore appointed temporarily by the assembly of the elders but, instead, installed by gods and/or legitimized as such as a son of a deity. Thus, the rise and articulation of the kingship ideology and the concept of the divine ruler coincide with the Sargonic dynasty and their immediate Sumerian successors, as various versions of SKL and the royal hymns attest. Ibid., passim.

[117] Hallo, *Sumerian Religion*, 96.

[118] Hallo, *Texts, Statues and the Cult*, 59–60.

[119] This was achieved by changing the temple architecture to resemble the contemporary royal palace and by placing in it "a life-size, seated statue of the deity looking for all the world like an enthroned king!" Hallo, *Sumerian Religion*, 96. Prior to this point in time, the representations of gods in full-size anthropomorphic statues had not existed. Instead, in pre- and during the ED periods, gods were presented and "worshipped, in theriomorphic or even in simply totemic form." Hallo, *Texts, Statues and the Cult*, 57–59. Hallo concludes that the "conception of a deity as not just anthropomorphic but what can best be described as basilomorphic can, then, be described as a distinctly Sumerian reaction to the Akkadian experiment with royal deification. Ibid, 97.

and (b) by including monarchs into the pantheon and bestowing on them divine honors (hymns, temples, and worship).[120] These changes find their particular expression in the idea that the king is the "mirror" image of a god.[121]

The Divine Kingship versus the Human Kingship

The writings refer to An and Enlil with the same title, "the King of Gods." Yet, it is clear that their authority springs from their leading position in the assembly of gods and that other deities are not in absolute submission to them but, rather, follow their guidance.[122] Frankfort elucidates that the kingship of the gods was not seen as a "natural concomitant of an orderly society, but as the product of confusion and anxiety. This genesis of kingship among the gods followed the pattern of its inception among men."[123]

Therefore, in the overall spectrum of ideological-theological tensions in Mesopotamia, the royal ideology applied to the realm of gods was due to the necessary accession aimed at keeping the balance between the earthly and heavenly powers. However, in the realm of earthly affairs, the final result of this interplay between political and religious ideas was that the kingship established itself as a divine gift to man, and the king eventually replaced a god as the ultimate ruler of the city.

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[120] Ibid., 62.

[121] As one neo-Assyrian proverb says, "'man is the shadow of a god, and a slave is the shadow of a man'; but the king is the mirror of a god." On a practical level, deification of the king and/or appeal to his divine image served to curb the cruelty of the Mesopotamian rulers by constantly reminding him of his duties as a benefactor and the mediator of divine blessings to the people. Wilfred G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 281–82. However, the practice of deification of the kings did not last long, see Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 224; Hallo, *Sumerian Religion*, 59; Philip Jones, "Divine and Non-Divine Kingship," in *A Companion to the Ancient Near East*, ed. Daniel C. Snell (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005), 231 and 331.

[122] Ibid., 231.

[123] As Frankfort rightly observes that neither "among the gods nor among men did the title 'king' denote the summit of a rigid hierarchical pyramid which was acknowledged as the only possible structure of society—for the memory of a kingless period in the past was never lost." On the survival of "primitive democracy" among the gods, see Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 232 and 236–37.

The City Personified, the City Deified

While deification of a king was both temporary and a fairly localized phenomenon,[124] a qualified view of city with the same attribution appears as a natural conclusion of the widespread theological illation that was more consequential and longer lasting. The traces of this process are visible in *Hymn to Enlil*, where Nippur, as a metonym for the people of the city, is taken to another level. Thus, "arrogance, violation of agreement, breach of contract, abuse of (a court) verdict (all these) evils the city does not tolerate."[125] In the same vein, an extended metaphor later in the hymn attributes to the city not only the physical qualities of a living entity by referring not only to her "arm," "heart," and "hand," but also to her moral and ethical character by being "endowed with truth... righteousness (and) justice," thus making Nippur truly personified.[126]

Besides, the early inscriptions display the lack of discrimination between a city and her god.[127] Thus, the city disputes are the disputes between their respective gods. So, *Hymn to Ninurta as a God of Wrath*, through an extended parallelism, emphasizes the identification of the god with his city.[128] Consequently, a war of a city against another city is not a mere earthly conflict but an attack on the city's god and/or affront to the divine authority that is involved.[129]

Moreover, the city's origin reaches to the primordial state and times, and their builders are gods, so the cities share divine radiance and glory. This feature, together with its

[124] It is traceable to the rite of sacred marriage, peculiar to the cult of Inanna in Uruk. See Averbeck, *Third Millennium Temple War*, 66–67.

[125] ANET, 573.

[126] ANET, 574. Likewise, see OS *The Kesh Temple Hymn* and *Temple Hymns*, as well as NS *Royal Hymns*, for examples of personification of the Sumerian cities and their primacy over the temples.

[127] The root of this attitude can be found in the notion that the city is a divine abode and manor, and, as such, it is identified with its divine master and lord.

[128] "Lord Ninurta, of the house of the foe, you are its adversary, of his city, you are its enemy." ANET, 577.

[129] On identification of the king and the city with its divine patron, see Garfinkle, *Ancient Near Eastern City-States*, 103–4.

identification with the temple, so that it is "somehow an expanded sanctuary, the holy and sacred emanation of the temple as well as a reflection of the heavenly temple,"[130] renders the city divine quality. How ingrained this view was can be seen at the end of a Babylonian contract, which makes a solemn statement that the parties involved "swore the oath by Shamash, Marduk, Sinmuballit, and the city of Sippar,"[131] clearly putting the gods and the city on the same level of sanctity of witness.[132]

Extreme Anthropomorphization of Gods

The anthropomorphism of Sumerian (Mesopotamian) religion is so intense, both in ritual and myth, that at times it is very difficult to discern whether the heavenly realm mirrors the earth or the earthly realm mirrors the heaven.[133] Consequently, the distinction between the spiritual and non-spiritual is nonexistent, and human and divine intermingle freely.[134]

Attribution of Human Inventiveness to Gods

In Mesopotamian thought, behind every creative and beneficial human endeavor stands the divine mind, provision, and purpose.[135] Most importantly, the cities, as the sum of all and every accomplishment, have their origin in divine activity and were created by gods.[136] In such a

[130] Anthonioz, *Cities of Glory*, 25–27.

[131] Text B1. ANET, 544.

[132] See William W. Hallo, *Origins: The Ancient Near Eastern Background of Some Modern Western Institutions* (Leiden, NL; New York, NY: Brill, 1996), 4.

[133] Jacobsen, *Treasures of Darkness*, 3–9; also, Jacobsen, *Cosmos as a State*, passim; Kramer, *Sumerians*, 112. In *Enki and Sumer*, gods are referred to as inhabiting Sumer and eating of her abundance. Likewise, the myth *Cattle and Grain* states that gods are "created," "born," and "fashioned." Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology*, 60 and 73; Bottero, *Religion and Reasoning in Mesopotamia*, 54; Oppenheim and Reiner, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 193.

[134] The literary piece known as *Ninisina's Journey to Nippur* describes this aptly. "Ninisina, the offspring of Heaven. Cohen, 91. On the text of the myth, see Mark E. Cohen, *New Treasures of Sumerian Literature: "When the Moon Fell from the Sky". And Other Works* (Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2018), 85–87.

[135] Actually, everything was made by gods, Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology*, 51–53; Kramer, *Sumerians*, 108, 111, and 173; Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology*, 51–53 and 59–62.

[136] See the hymn to Enlil. "Enlil... You built Nippur as your very own city, the Kiur... You founded in the Duranki, in the center of the four corners (of the universe)." ANET, 574.

constellation of ideas, it is normal that both gods and humans are simultaneously and without any tension seen as the builders of the cities.[137]

Sociomorphism: The Projection of the Earthly Polity on the World of the Gods

The result of Sumerian and Akkadian anthropomorphism and deification of human deeds was the projection of their own world onto the divine realm.[138] Since the starting point of the Mesopotamians was their own experience, their assessment of the world and speculation on its structure and function led them to define it in terms of the familiar framework of social and political institutions.[139]

The basic unit of the archaic Mesopotamian society was family, with the house as its common dwelling place. This imagery and underlying structure were applied to the world of gods, resulting in greatly extended and intertwined divine families and impacting their affiliations with their divine abodes—the temples.[140] Thus, the major gods and goddesses were envisioned and depicted as the large estate owners in charge of their earthly possessions, such as

[137] However, some achievements of the initial divine creativity could not be enjoyed by gods, so the creation of man was a solution. Thus, men are created to serve gods by liberating them from hard physical work and also to do the tasks that gods are not capable of doing. In the process, this brings them to a higher level through, essentially, a divinization of human activity. The purpose of human participation in the cosmic order was to take care of the gods, who represented and stood behind the forces of nature, free them, and uphold them to perform their divine activities aimed at preserving the proper and uninterrupted functioning of the cosmos. Thus, Kramer clarifies that "theoretically at least, the Sumerian theologians taught that man was created by the gods solely to serve and tend then and presumably, therefore, that the god-man relationship corresponded to that of master-slave." Kramer, *Sumerians*, 258. Likewise, Bottero, *Religion and Reasoning in Mesopotamia*, 53. Jacobsen, *Cosmos as a State*, 191. Regardless, the chasm between man and god is unbridgeable.

[138] For the timeline of the successive stages of this process, see Jacobsen, *Treasures of Darkness*, 21–22.

[139] This process started early and was embedded in the fundamental traditions that were, in time, translated into the myths, which are by nature resilient to change. The point when this understanding of the universe started taking shape can be traced to the Proto-literate period (c. 3500 BC). Reflecting on the processes shaping this concept, Jacobsen writes that to the Mesopotamian, "cosmic order did not appear as something given; rather it became something achieved through a continual integration of many individual cosmic wills, that is, in terms of social orders such as the family, the community, and, most particularly, the state. To put it succinctly, he saw the cosmic order as an order of wills—as a state." Jacobsen, *Cosmos as a State*, 126–128. Thus, more than any other genre, the myth preserved the archaic features of Mesopotamian family life and the rudiments of social organization even after some elements of the structure ceased to exist and/or the system became significantly altered. Thorkild Jacobsen, "Early Political Development in Mesopotamia," *ZAVA* 52, no. 1 (January 1, 1957): 99–100.

[140] For the related analogies, see Averbeck, *Third Millennium Temple War*, 45–48.

the shrines, the cities, and their economy and order.[141]

However, within the urban environment, this structure went beyond a single household and involved many additional families, thus defining their overall set of relationships and interactions in a different way. The result was the emergence of the assembly of citizens that was in charge of city affairs.[142] This model was, too, projected to the heavenly realm, where gods altogether functioned as human polity,[143] a bicameral assembly of seven gods who "decree the fates" and with fifty gods designated as "the great gods," who altogether were chaired by the king, the supreme god.[144] This divine assembly, just like the human city council, would at times gather under the lead of An in a corner of the forecourt of Enlil's temple, Ekur in Nippur, to decide important questions.[145]

However, the 3rd millennium BC Sumerian religious imagination had already moved to, adopted, and applied the kingship ideology and the customs sprouting from the king's palace's and court to the principal deities and the divine families.[146] By the second half of the 2nd millennium BC, the assembly of gods was still present; however, the kingly aspect of the

[141] Consequently, the whole plethora of earthly activities and their corresponding administrative positions were transposed to the divine sphere, with the divine actors involved in every possible mundane transaction. Jacobsen, *Cosmos as a State*, 187–88. This meant that the entire families of gods and the members of their households were included and participated in various roles in the day-to-day operations of the multifaceted aspects of these divine/earthly manors. On mirroring the court structure populated with the family of the earthly rulers, see Averbeck, *Third Millennium Temple War*, 48.

[142] Jacobsen, *Cosmos as a State*, 128–29.

[143] The nascent city-state became a model of success; thus, its structure was transposed to the cosmos. This concept antecedes history and, therefore, appears to be very old. Ibid., 129.

[144] See Jacobsen, *Primitive Democracy in Ancient Mesopotamia*, 167–72.

[145] On the structure and functions of the divine assembly, see Jacobsen, *Treasures of Darkness*, 86–87, 90. At any rate, the universe as an organized whole was a society, a state. Jacobsen, *Cosmos as a State*, 148–49.

[146] Therefore, the gods and the temples became equivalent to the royal families and their households, while the everyday cultus and even the physical aspects of worship became copies of the king's palace everyday routine and experience. After Jacobsen, *Primitive Democracy in Ancient Mesopotamia*, 167; Bottero, *Religion and Reasoning in Mesopotamia*, 54. On the physical accommodations of the cult that followed these changes, see Hallo, *Sumerian Religion*, 96.

principal deity was already predominant, as *Enuma Elish* can attest.[147] At any rate, even in this new constellation of functions and roles, with politics inseparable from the metaphors associated with the gods, the view of the universe as a polity that in all aspects primarily corresponds to that of the city was maintained.[148]

The City in Old Sumerian Literature

When it comes to the city, Hallo addresses some of the founding myths[149] and narratives[150] related to the origin of the cities in southern Mesopotamia in a thematic way. He keenly observes that these texts reflect very particular urban concerns.[151] In the process, Hallo offers a succinct yet very dense summary and overview of some important Sumerian and Akkadian texts, with particular focus on the first city, pre-flood cities, and some selected cities, including Babylon.[152] Hallo, therefore, demonstrates that city is not an accidental or subservient subject in Mesopotamian literature but, in many respects, its leitmotif.

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[147] The old role of gods, in which they stood behind the forces of nature and the power of fertility, remained even until the 1st millennium BC. However, these functions were assumed under extended and politically colored roles that were being conferred by the supreme god An or the chief of the pantheon Enlil. So, the essential nature of deities became the appointment to a cosmic office. These offices correspond to the titles of the administrative positions in the earthly structure of power headed by the king. Hallo, *Sumerian Religion*, 85.

[148] Jacobsen notes that the process of personalizing and deifying natural phenomena and their effects was characterized by intense humanization and, consequently, socialization. So, his conclusion is that in "such a world it obviously gives better sense than it does in our world to speak of the relations between phenomena of nature as social relations, of the order in which they function as an order of wills, as a state." *Cosmos as a State*, 130–131. Also, Jacobsen, *Treasures of Darkness*, 80–81.

[149] On discussions of myth and speculative thinking, see Henri A. Frankfort, "Myth and Reality," in *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man* (Chicago, IL; London, UK: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), 3–4; Marc Van De Mieroop, *Philosophy before the Greeks: The Pursuit of Truth in Ancient Babylonia* (Princeton, NJ: Oxford University Press, 2015), passim.

[150] Concerning the nature and genres of Sumerian literature, see Samuel N. Kramer, *History Begins at Sumer* (London, GB: Thames & Hudson, 1958), 76; Roux, *Ancient Iraq*, 82.

[151] However, all that is known about the prevalent ideas "has to be ferreted out and pieced together from the Sumerian literary works, particularly their myths, epic tales, and hymns," as Kramer aptly observes. Samuel N. Kramer, "Sumerian Theology and Ethics," *HTR* 49, no. 1 (January 1956): 45.

[152] See William W. Hallo, "Urban Origins in Cuneiform and Biblical Sources (Founding Myths of Cities in the Ancient Near East: Mesopotamia and Israel)" in *World's Oldest Literature, Studies in Sumerian Belles-Lettres* (Leiden, Netherlands; Boston, MA: Brill, 2009), 547–48.

Sumerian Mythology

For the purposes of this inquiry, the following functional definition is suggested: Myth,[153] be it a social practice or a genre, through extended symbolism and analogy, follows a certain story line in an attempt to offer a tenable explanation of the universe and its phenomena that is congruent with the observed processes in nature, society, and history.[154] Based on the specifics of their focus and density of references related to the city, several myths pertaining to creation or origin, etiology, travels of gods, and some miscellaneous myths draw particular attention.[155]

Creation Myths

The early and extensive OS compositions that can be clearly designated as myths[156] are not available at the present moment. However, *The Barton Cylinder* is the oldest document that

[153] Reflection on Benjamin R. Foster, "Sumerian Mythology," in *The Sumerian World*, ed. Harriet Crawford (London, GB: Routledge, 2016), 436. On discussions of the meaning of myth, see Frankfort, *Myth and Reality*, 4–7; Lauri Honko, "The Problem of Defining Myth," *SIDA* 6 (January 1, 1972), passim; Bronislaw Malinowski, "Myth in Primitive Psychology," in *Magic, Science, and Religion and Other Essays* (Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1948) 100–1; Marcel Sigrist, "Myth, Magic, and Ritual," in *Opening the Tablet Box: Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Benjamin R. Foster*, ed. Sarah C. Melville and Alice L. Slotsky (Leiden, NL; Boston, MA: Brill, 2010), 397.

[154] This story is often projected in an environment characterized by abstractions cloaked in theology and/or otherwise expressed in a culturally appropriate language with the purpose of articulating and shaping certain experiences within the grid of a particular need and/or agenda. As such, myth is a narrative (either oral or literary) construction of reality and, therefore, a valid, legitimate, and authoritative way of conveying truth, ideas, worldviews, values, and traditions that are comprehensible, adequate, and acceptable to the intended audience. It communicates sense, order, and coherence to the otherwise untidy world. Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1975), 5–11; Nicolas Wyatt, *The Mythic Mind: Essays on Cosmology and Religion in Ugaritic and Old Testament Literature* (London, GB; Oakville, CT: Routledge, 2014), 158–61.

[155] The following selection of texts that belong to the major Sumerian literary genres is presented as OS sources, though the majority of them are primarily attested in NS copies that mainly come from the OB layers of Nippur and Ur. For a summary of the genres and findings at these sites, see Gonzalo Rubio "Sumerian Literature," in *From an Antique Land: An Introduction to Ancient Near Eastern Literature*, ed. Carl S. Ehrlich (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009), 11–75.

[156] Mesopotamian thought displays two major and distinct speculative ideas related to the creation of the world. The first, Sumerian, was a serene arrangement of the preexisting world and its elements into a life-supporting environment, motivated by etiological concerns and characterized by a relatively even distribution of authority among the primary and other involved deities. The second, Babylonian, postulated the creation of the world through violent battle and victory over the primordial chaos. After Morris Jastrow, "The Sumerian View of Beginnings," *JAOS* 36 (1916): 130–31. The successful conquest ushers creation through the separation of elements and, consequently, marshals law and order in the world. This view exalted the divine victor and put great emphasis on

speaks in mythological terms and hints at creation.[157]

The Barton Cylinder[158]

The Barton Cylinder is a prism that contains twenty columns of fragmented text. The complexity of the text and its archaic script present great challenges to the translators and interpreters of the myth.[159] However, many elements that are common in the later mythopoeic writings, both structural and cosmological, are easily recognizable. Such are the embryonic state of the universe and the creative acts of the deities. Remarkably, the city of Nippur appears in the prologue column, whose phraseology corresponds to the much later introductions to the primordial creation narratives.[160] So, the line that mentions the "sacred area of Nippur" presupposes the existence of the city, which is later denotatively mentioned in column five. Moreover, the storm motif that follows and is a part of the conversation between heaven and earth is an archaic metaphor that recalls the imagery of the initial acts of creation.[161] This representation, together with the theogony that follows in the second column, indicates the early stages of the development of the universe, thus implying Nippur's preexistence[162] and referring

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kingship, with authority and power centralized in this deity. Under the veneer of superficial similarities, there are essential differences between Sumerian, Babylonian, and Biblical accounts and literary styles. NERT, 70.

[157] Bendt Alster, "On the Earliest Sumerian Literary Tradition," *JCS* 28, no. 2 (1976): 109–14.

[158] For pertinent information on the *Barton Cylinder*, see Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology*, 19; George A. Barton, *Miscellaneous Babylonian Inscriptions* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1915), 1–25; Bendt Alster and Aage Westenholz, "The Barton Cylinder," *AS* 16 (1994): 15–46; Alster, *Earliest Sumerian Literary Tradition*, 109–10.

[159] Jeremy Black, "The Sumerians in Their Landscape," in *Riches Hidden in Secret Places: Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Memory of Thorkild Jacobsen*, ed. I. Tzvi Abusch (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 44.

[160] "Those days were indeed faraway days... In the sacred area of Nibru, the storm roared, the lights flashed. Heaven talked with Earth, Earth talked with Heaven." Ibid., 45.

[161] See Ake W. Sjoberg, "In the Beginning," in *Riches Hidden in Secret Places: Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Memory of Thorkild Jacobsen*, ed. I. Tzvi Abusch (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 233–36.

[162] "Here, primeval cosmic events are imagined. But they are linked to a known location—in this case, the city of Nibru (Nippur). Nibru here is both the scene of a mythic drama and, at the same time, the familiar city in northern Sumer. It is transfigured by this drama to a symbolic status—like Jerusalem, Byzantium, or Rome—which makes it far more than a mere city. The location becomes a metaphor." Black, *Sumerians in Their Landscape*, 45.

to her as the cradle of creation![163] Since creation was seen either as the act of giving birth or an act of organization, the assumption that the city already existed is quite significant and extraordinary. Whatever the level of perception or comprehension of absolute reality was at the time of the myth's composition, the cosmological speculation of the writer and his probable circle (a) posits the city right in the divine world of ideas and (b) implicitly defines the universe as a city.

Etiological Myths

Within the larger world of Mesopotamian thought, the Sumerians were primarily motivated by etiological interests. Though the appearance of the city in etiological myths seems rather accidental, they mention the city in various contexts and for different purposes subordinate to the main themes, thus still communicating important ideas related to it.

Enlil and Ninlil (Creation of the Moon)

Though the *Enlil and Ninlil* [164] story is singular in its concern with the origin of the celestial bodies (the Moon god, in particular), it touches on several other equally important themes. Of particular interest are the hints of Sumerian beliefs related to the nature of the city, which represents the scene of the unfolding events.

Peculiarly the preamble offers a laudation directed to the city before it turns to the primary divine actors. The expression "bond of heaven and earth," so familiar from the temple hymns, appears right at the beginning. Just like there, it refers to Nippur as the cosmic mountain and thereby relates to the whole city in temple terms.[165] Therefore, this complex and lengthy story is set in a universe populated with gods. They all enjoy Nippur's real historical and well-

[163] Espak, *God Enki*, 172–73.

[164] In older scholarly literature, the myth is also known as *Enlil and Ninlil: The Begetting of Nanna*.

[165] "Behold the 'bond of heaven and earth,' the city." Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology*, 43.

known physical places[166] and live as ordinary city dwellers.[167] There are no humans; instead, the elements of both the cosmic and terrestrial realms are still in the process of formation.

In the course of the poem, we learn that Enlil rapes Ninlil bathing, and, as a result, he is banished from Nippur by the assembly of gods.[168] Though the city in this myth is barely more than a locale around which the events unfold, it is related to the story in distinguishing terms. First, its physical and historical features are already present within the primordial setting, which implicitly attributes its founding to the gods. So, all elements listed in the introductory lines are of great cultural (the ancient names of honor, Duranki and Durgishimmar), economic (the irrigation canals, the harbor, the fields), and religious (Enlil, Ninlil, and other deities) importance. Second, it is populated by gods, not humans, and, as such, it predates the creation of man as a preferred divine habitat. Third, the institution of the great assembly, with its judicial and executive powers, is unquestionably in charge of city affairs. Fourth, the forced expulsion from the city and its protection, provision, and support was equivalent to a death sentence. Thus, life in the city was implicitly related to and equated to overall wellbeing and was singled out as the desirable mode of existence. All these features properly belong to an early independent city-state during the age of Sumerian dominance and are in toto transposed to the realm of the divine, thereby defining the cosmos as a polity modeled on the city.

Enki and Ninhursag (The Dilmun Myth)

The story of *Enki and Ninhursag*[169] is quite puzzling for several reasons. First, it is set in

[166] "Behold the Idsalla, its pure river... the Karkurunna, its quay... the Karasarra, its quay where the boats stand." Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology*, 43.

[167] "Behold Enlil, its young man... Ninlil, its young maid... Nunbarshegunu, its old woman." Ibid.

[168] "The fifty great gods... the seven gods... caused Enlil to be arrested in Kiur:" Jacobsen, *Cosmos as a State*, 153.

[169] *The Story of Enki and Ninhursag*, or *The Dilmun Myth*, is yet another archaic composition. However, the oldest substantially preserved copies of the myth are dated to the OB period (1800–1600 BC).

Dilmun, a historical place whose location cannot be yet determined. Second, it is not clear whether the place is a paradise or an empty desert that needs water in order to become filled with life and purpose. What is clear, however, is that it is conceived as city,[170] a divine habitat, although seemingly a temporary one, for the two among the principal deities of the Sumerian pantheon. This city, which is initially not more than a locale for a complex story, comes into existence through divine action before the creation of man.

The island of Dilmun, is in the introductory panegyric called both "land" and "city" and described as being established in a "pure, clean, and bright" place. Its pristine character points to its primordial origin at the beginning of everything. Dilmun is a place where there is neither sickness nor death; however, it is a place that displays the behavioral and functional chaos of both animals and people who, strangely, do not yet exist.[171] Enki, as a god who upholds the world's order, intervenes to rectify the situation by providing sweet water, which was previously nonexistent, thus causing fertile farmland to appear. Thus, he provides the necessary elements that support and accompany the urban environment and effectively establishes the city. Dilmun, consequently, becomes known as "the house of the bank\-quays of the land,"[172] while the resulting fecundity of soil leads to human and animal life.[173] The myth's archaic motifs and setting reflect an old tradition that likely dates back to the Pre-Literary period, when gods were seen as the founders, the sustainers, and the sole possessors of the cities.

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[170] See the comment by Morris Jastrow in "Sumerian Myths of Beginnings," *AJSL* 33, no. 2 (1917): 102–3.

[171] Jastrow, *Sumerian Myths of Beginnings*, 106–8.

[172] ANET, 37. "Dilmun drinks the water of abundance... Her fields and farms produced crops and grain... Dilmun, behold it is become the house of the banks and quays of the land." Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology*, 54–55.

[173] Jastrow writes that this place in the text may "be taken as an index of the way in which the Sumerians viewed the beginnings of things. In common with all primitive peoples, they do not conceive of a time when nothing existed—a *creatio ex nihilo*—but assume the world to be in existence, though without life... The earth is there and the waters, the mountains, and even cities, but there is no life." Jastrow, *Sumerian Myths of Beginnings*, 120.

Enki and Ninmah

The origin of man and speculations on his purpose are recurring themes in several Sumerian myths. However, *Enki and Ninmah*[174] is more than an account of anthropogony; it is also a creation myth that combines thegony and etiology. The etiology takes up the second half of the myth and is aimed at explaining some of the peculiar physical conditions among men and their place within society. However, even the theogonic introduction is abundant with imagery that befits human reality: gods are born, they get married, have children, toil digging the irrigation canals and cleaning silt from the existing waterworks, eat food in dining halls—all these elements constitute ordinary day-to-day Mesopotamian city life.[175] Dissatisfaction with every day's hard work causes great commotion among the gods that alarms Namma (the mother goddess) to seek a solution, which, in her words and plan, is the creation of "a substitute" that would take over the duties of the constant toil.[176] As a result of divine distress, man is created.

Though the story line of *Enki and Ninmah* takes a different direction in the rest of the narrative, the introduction makes clear that the existence of the city, though implicit, is embedded in cosmogony and theogony. Likewise, in the sequence of creation, it precedes the making of humanity. Thus, man appears to have been created in the city.

[174] Just like the other important NS compositions it comes from Nippur's OB period stash.

[175] "In those days, in the days when heaven and earth were created... when the Anuna gods were born; when the goddesses were taken in marriage... became pregnant and gave birth... the senior gods oversaw the work, while the minor gods were bearing the toil. The gods were digging the canals and piling up the silt in Ḫarali. The gods, crushing the clay, began complaining about this life." ETCSL 1.1.2.

[176] "Enki... My son, wake up from your bed! Please apply the skill deriving from your wisdom and create a substitute (?) for the gods so that they can be freed from their toil!"

Myths of the Journeys of Gods

Enki's Journey to Nibru[177]

The main topic of *Enki's Journey to Nibru*[178] is building the temple as the proper and appropriate mansion for the divine prince and the resulting journey to An in a quest for his blessing. The time of building succeeds the appearance of man, but early enough, relative to the initial creative acts of An, as can be deduced from the other myths.[179] Although the city where the temple is founded is not yet mentioned by name, its presence is implied. This becomes obvious later in the text, especially in the concluding lines where it says, "in Eridug, he built the house on the bank;" therefore, the city precedes the temple. As the myth goes, Enki's vizier Isimud utters a long praise to the shrine. Yet, Eridu is beloved by Enki (sic),[180] not the temple, and the praise to the temple extends to the city.

The temple is Enki's residence; still, building the temple serves to exalt Eridu. Moreover, Eridu is in the text addressed by An as the cosmic "mountain" set in the primordial waters and as the "pure place," which links it to creation.[181] The penultimate line of the poem that calls E-engura "the temple of Eridug" clearly identifies the temple as the attribute of the city and not

[177] Myths that describe gods traveling around the cities of Lower Mesopotamia are considered either a separate genre or a group within the corpus of Sumerian literature due to their very specific topic—a visit of a god or a goddess to the temple of the parent or a superior deity.

[178] Concerning pertinent information on the myth, see Peeter Espak, "On the Time of Composition of the Hitherto Undated Sumerian Myths," in *Cultural Crossroads in the Middle East: The Historical, Cultural and Political Legacy of Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict from the Ancient Near East to the Present Day*, ed. Vladimir Sazonov et al., 2nd ed. (Tartu, EE: University of Tartu Press, 2019), 44−45.

[179] "In those remote days, when the fates were determined; in a year when An brought about abundance, and people broke through the earth like green plants...Enki... built up his temple." ETCSL 1.1.4.

[180] "Enki's beloved Eridug... Eridug, your shadow extends over the midst of the sea!" This element of divine love for the city surpassing love for everything else is expressed in an even more pronounced way in *Theogony of Dunnu*.

[181] Eridu, the city, provides a mythical paradigm; it is presented as paradise. See Alfred Jeremias, *The Babylonian Conception of Heaven and Hell*, trans. Jane Hutchison (London, UK: David Nutt, 1902), 23–24 and 40–41; Gwendolyn Leick, *Mesopotamia: The Invention of the City* (London, GB: Penguin Books, 2003), 2.

vice versa.[182]

The City in Neo-Sumerian Literature

The prevalent majority of Sumerian myths, as well as other literature, belong to the NS literary corpus, which in turn is predominantly datable to the OB period.[183] The fact that some traditions were scrupulously preserved unchanged for hundreds of years in their written form is strong evidence of a general respect for and acceptance of the ancient beliefs. NS mythopoeic and related writings follow in major outlines the conceptual tangent set in OS literature regarding the origin, place, and role of city.[184]

Creation Myths

Enki Organizes the World (Enki and the World Order)

This mythical poem[185] consists of four distinctive parts: the hymn to Enki (Lines 1–60), the self-glorification of Enki (Lines 61–85),[186] the attribution of destinies to the world (Lines 171–389), and Inanna's complaint (Lines 390–420). The third part of the poem that talks about the act of inspection and ordering of the world is very peculiar in its entirety. It addresses Sumer,

[182] "Enki has raised Eridug up, it is an artfully built mountain which floats on the water... He has built it in a pleasant place, in Eridug, the pure place... the temple of Eridug."

[183] Some scholars believe that the Sumerian mythological stories are, actually, literary compositions of the Babylonian scribes not a body of ancient Sumerian traditions. Foster, *Sumerian Mythology*, 435–36.

[184] It is quite evident that the ideological content related to the city was variously qualified in ways to suit political bents of different dynasties and/or individual rulers. Espak, *Undated Sumerian Myths*, passim.

[185] The context of Enki Organizes the World, with the city of Ur in the center of composition, suggests the end of the third millennium during the III Dynasty of Ur period as the time of the work. Anthonioz, *Cities of Glory*, 25.

[186] A hymn to Enki serves as the formal opening of the poem. Besides the usual laudation directed to the deity, it contains a couple of familiar tropes that echo the concepts in OS material. Thus, Eridu is pictured as so big and large that its "shadow covers heaven and earth," evidently connecting them. Likewise, the city is "founded in the Abzu," the primordial waters, and its "great house" is the "great mooring-post," the cosmic tree that is the bond of heaven and earth. The phrase "great house" applies equally to the temple and the city. However, the expression "mooring-post," or "mooring pool" is a metaphor that is usually related to the city. Later, as we progress through the myth, we learn that the purpose of the founding of the cities was to serve the needs of the gods. Thus, Enki "demarcated borders and fixed boundaries. For the Anuna gods, Enki situated dwellings in cities and disposed agricultural land into fields." Man is not mentioned at all; thus, agriculture, though properly related to the founding of the city, sequentially comes after it. ETCSL 1.1.3.

the city of Ur, the commercially and politically important lands and even the rivers Tigris and Euphrates. Enki decrees destinies to these places that include the bestowal of arts, technology, and economy. But instead of establishing kingship as the means of control, he appoints divine managers over both the gifts and the localities. This element hints that the time in this case is the moment of creation, yet it refers to cities, lands, and elements of nature as already existing. So, Anthonioz concludes that the myth is ideologically centered on Ur but also communicates that cities are not mere human creations to benefit men. Cities also "have a quasi-divine status they receive from their establishment at the beginning of time," when their economic, urban, and social organization was initially set up.[187] In short, the NS mythical poem *Enki Organizes the World* obviously incorporates contemporary economic and political realities and/or interest in its composition. However, there are elements of the archaic beliefs in it that place the city in the world of divine ideas and present it as the focus of divine concerns and priorities, which are taken for granted and preserved intact.

The Song of the Hoe (In praise of the Pickaxe)

The Song of the Hoe is Nippur's creation myth that presents the city of Enlil in grand terms.[188] According to the text, Enlil deals with the preexisting matter and creates by making the "world appear in its correct form" and by separating "heaven from earth... and earth from heaven."[189] Then, he proceeds to establish Nippur as the "world mountain," or *axis mundi*, and the essential prerequisite for the creation of man. Only then can humans sprout from earth to

[187] Anthonioz, *Cities of Glory*, 25.

[188] The composition belongs to the genre of disputations that emerged with the rise of NS literature, and several texts in this category are dated to about 2100 BC. The mythical introduction follows the convention of setting the dispute in the right time and context. However, theogony and lengthy descriptions that indicate the primordial state of the universe are omitted. Instead, the first stanzas offer a very condensed cosmogony in a rather abrupt way.

[189] Translation by Gertrud Farber, CS, 511.

serve in Enlil's temple and attend to the needs of other gods.[190] Once humans are created, the gods assign them tasks, of which the construction of the temples is the first and foremost importance.[191] However, the building sites of the temples are not haphazardly chosen but are in the cities that already exist.[192] Thus, cities as primordial elements of divine creation belong to cosmogony; they precede the temples and are the necessary precondition for the creation of man.

Etiological Myths

Eridu Genesis (The Sumerian Flood Story)

This myth[193] consists of three divisions that contain several narratives that thematically and sequentially resemble the biblical creation and pre-Flood history accounts, thus "Genesis" in the name. The major themes of these sections are: (1) the origins of the city-state,[194] (2) the rulers of the city-states, and (3) the Flood.[195]

The lost introductory part is believed to have a narrative related to the creation of man and animals. At the beginning of the myth as we know it, Nintur (Ninhursaga), the mother goddess, pities the miserable state of human existence without cities. Men seem to aimlessly wander around as nomads and, presumably, live as savages.[196] The goddess's gracious intent is

[190] "But, in order to make it possible for humans to grow 'where the flesh sprouts,' lie first affixed the axis of the world in Duranki."

[191] "The Ekur, the temple of Enlil, was founded with the hoe, during the day it was building, during the night it caused (the temple) to grow."

[192] "(Next comes) the Abzu, the one with the lion face, where the divine offices may not be claimed: The hoe wielder (= builder), (....), the lord Nudimmud (= Enki), was building the Abzu, Eridu having been chosen as a construction site."

[193] The fragment of *The Eridu Genesis* was recorded sometimes around 1600 BC by an Old Babylonian scribe in Nippur. Thorkild Jacobsen, "The Eridu Genesis," *JBL* 100, no. 4 (December 1981): 513–14.

[194] Hallo proposes that the myth is etiological as it explains the causes behind the creation of the urban centers, with the caveat that it is about the capitals. Hallo, *Origins*, 5–6.

[195] Ibid., 526.

[196] "[Nintur] was paying [attention:] 'Let me bethink myself of my humankind, (all) forgotten as they are; and mind[ful] of mine, Nintur's, creatures let me bring them back, let me lead the people back from their trails.'" Translation by Thorkild Jacobsen, CS, 513.

to help man by making him build cities and temples and, thus, to become civilized. However, there are other not-so-selfless motives behind this act, because these cities are going to be Nintur's places of residence and, by extension, of all other divine beings.[197] In order to assure that the newly created civilized society works orderly and that people worship gods properly, Nintur provides the institution of the kingship.[198] So, the office of the king is to maintain the ritual and spread the city culture. Essentially, the cities (culture), the temples (religion), and the kingship (government), the three pillars of the Mesopotamian civilization, enforce the theological construct that man is created and exists to serve the needs of gods. The created cities, therefore, are allotted to gods to enjoy them as their personal estates and cult sites.[199] The five antediluvian cities, Eridu, Bad-Tibira (or Patibira), Larak, Sippar, and Shuruppak, are, according to tradition, the oldest cities in the world, and their founding is set close to the Creation and the Flood.[200] In the text, they appear in the exact same order as in SKL, which points to a possibly early and well-established tradition.[201] These cities become the centers of the distributive economy, where work is paid in rations.[202] In turn, hard labor on the irrigation canal system ensures the prosperity of antediluvian cities. Interestingly, the cities predate irrigation and, consequently, the agriculture, both of which are essential for the existence and success of the newly founded capitals.

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[197] "May they come and build cities and cult places, that I may cool myself in their shade; may they lay the bricks for the cult cities in pure spots, and may they found places for divination in pure spots!"

[198] "'[...] and let me have [h]im [a]dvise; let me have him overse[e] their [la]bor, and let him t[each] the nation to follow along unerringly like [catjtle!' When the royal [sce]pter was com[ing] down from heaven, the august [cr]own and the royal [th]rone being already down from heaven, he (the king) [regularly] performed to perfection the august divine services and offices, laid [the bricks] of those cities [in pure spots.]"

[199] "The firstling of those cities, Eridu, she gave to the leader Nudimmud, the second, Bad-Tibira, she gave to the prince and the sacred one the third, Larak, she gave to Pahilsag, the fourth, Sippar, she gave to the gallant, Utu. The fifth, Shuruppak, she gave to Ansud."

[200] Hallo, *Origins*, 14.

[201] On intertextuality and transmission of SKL, see Hallo, *Urban Origins*, 549–51.

[202] For comment on the meaning of the "half-bushel baskets," see Jacobsen, *Eridu Genesis*, 518–519.

In the third section, the gods decide to destroy cities and humanity by a flood. It appears that destruction does not befall the land in general but the cities and people who live in them, which in turn constitute "the country."[203] Eventually, the gods restore order, and humans again build the post-flood cities and pursue the same goals and priorities. Thus, the *Eridu Genesis* is a sequenced summary of the Sumerian and/or Mesopotamian mythic-historical development of institutions and a clear statement of the precedencies in which the city takes fundamental place and role.

Epics

Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Netherworld (Gilgamesh and Huluppu Tree)[204]

The narration of *Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Netherworld*[205] consists of three self-standing main parts that are additionally subdivided: (a) the cosmological prologue; (b) the descent of Enkidu to the Netherworld; and (c) the return of Enkidu and his report to Gilgamesh. The mythological introduction is very formal, as it lays out the proper setting for the entry of the actual story. However, its singular take on cosmogony is quite remarkable, since the prologue places the origin of the city within cosmogony.[206] This is rather implied than explicit, as the

[203] "And as Ziusudra stood there beside it, he [went on he]aring: 'Step up to the wall to my left and listen! Let me speak a word to you at the wall [and may you grasp] what [I] say, May you he[ed] my advice! By our hand a flood will sweep over (the cities of) the half-bushel bas[kets, and the country;] [the decision,] that mankind is to be destroyed, has been made.'"

[204] Concerning the characteristics of the epics genre, see Hallo, *Toward a History of Sumerian Literature*, 189. On a theological and/or ideological level, we can concur with Hallo's assessment that the "Sumerian epic was a conscious vehicle for mythologems in general and for aetiologies in particular." Hallo, *Origins*, 219. On the epic as a designation for Sumerian and Akkadian narrative poetry, see. R. Heskett, *Reading the Book of Isaiah: Destruction and Lament in the Holy Cities* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 25 n.133.

[205] For pertinent information on the Sumerian Gilgamesh Cycle, see Alhena Gadotti, *Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Netherworld and the Sumerian Gilgamesh Cycle* (Berlin, D; Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2014), 98–106.

[206] "In those days, in those distant days, in those nights, in those remote nights, in those years, in those distant years; in days of yore, when the necessary things had been brought into manifest existence . . . when bread had been tasted for the first time in the shrines of the Land, when the ovens of the Land had been made to work, when the heavens had been separated from the earth, when the earth had been delimited from the heavens, when the fame of mankind had been established." ETCSL 1.8.1.4.

"bread" offering and "the shrine" in the first stanzas properly belong to the temple imagery or assume the invention of agriculture, which traditionally follows the creation of the city and its context. In other words, the creation sequence places the materialization of "the necessary things" before the appearance of the cultic environment and ahead of the act of creative separation of heaven and earth with the consequent establishment of humans. Thus, by deduction, city is present both (a) in the embryonic universe or, should we say, the world of divine ideas, and then (b) becomes translated "into manifest existence."

Disputations

The Debate between Bird and Fish[207]

The *Debate between Bird and Fish* is NS writing from the OB period that Bottero and Kramer categorize as anthropogony.[208] Indeed, the poem has a familiar cosmological prologue that culminates with the establishment of humankind. The beginning of the debate evokes the primordial times and summarizes the cosmogony in which An and Enlil set rules and destinies, and, then, Enki organizes the existing world.[209] The text makes the allusion that Enki's action has to do with the establishment of the "dwelling places,"[210] so in the process, he establishes an environment inviting to be populated.[211] In an ascending manner, Enki adds the life-arteries of Sumer, the rivers Tigris and Euphrates with their tributaries and "ditches," presumably, the

[207] Disputations or debates belong to the genre of wisdom literature. Their introductions are particularly interesting since they contain brief summaries of theogony, cosmogony, and anthropogony. Catherine Mittermayer, "The Sumerian Precedence Debates: The World's Oldest Rhetorical Exercises?" in *Disputation Literature in the Near East and Beyond*, ed. Enrique Jiménez and Catherine Mittermayer (Berlin, D; Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2020), 11–12.

[208] Jean Bottero nd Samuel N. Krame, *Lorsque Les Dieux Faisaient L'homme: Mythologie Mésopotamienne* (Paris, F: Gallimard, 1989), 517–20.

[209] "[In long gone, far off days], after the kind fate had been decreed, [After An and Enlil] had set up the rules of heaven and earth, [Nudimmud, noble prince], the lord of broad insight, — [Lord Enki,] decreeing [the fates], their third one he surely is! —" CS, 581.

[210] "[The waters ...] he collected, founded dwelling-places."

[211] "[Life-giving (waters)?] which beget fecund seed he held in hand."

irrigation canals.[212] Once the land is prepared for farming, Enki provides the necessary base for herding.[213] The final elements in this creative sequence are "cities and villages" that he founded and "so made mankind thrive." At this point, "the black headed people" begin to multiply and need a governmental structure, which Enki graciously provides.[214]

The way of setting the sequence of the rudiments betrays a particular reasoning that has clear priorities. It is not the multitude of people and plenitude of provision that forego (or cause) the creation of the cities. On the contrary, it is the cities that myth designates as essential for (a) fecundity and (b) productivity of both man and nature.[215]

Historiography

Sumerian King List (SKL)[216]

SKL encapsulates the history of the Sumerian city, albeit in a somewhat truncated way by repetitively listing the succession of the selected rulers[217] that reigned for variously long periods of time over the programmatically sorted cities.[218] The list starts with the pre-Flood Eridu and ends with the kings of the III Dynasty of Ur and their immediate successors at Isin.[219]

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[212] "[Tigris and] Euphrates he laid out side by side, and brought in them (the water of) the mountains; [The smaller] streams he scoured, and put in ditches too."

[213] "[Father] Enki also made wide pens and stalls, and provided shepherd and herdsman."

[214] "A king he gave them for shepherd, and raised him to sovereignty over them; The king rose as daylight over the countries." Translated by H. L. J. Vanstiphout, CS, 581

[215] We may join Bottero and Kramer in the assumption that humans already exist and that Enki merely reveals the secrets of irrigation, agriculture, and civilized life to them. Bottero and Kramer, *Mythologie Mésopotamienne*, 519.

[216] Mesopotamian historiography is a quite unattended field of research, a field that is burdened with great complexity. For pertinent information on the genre, see A. Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (Locust Valley, NY: J. J. Augustin Publisher, 1975), 2–6 and 193–94.

[217] Based on its initial and arguably primary focus, Hallo says that in "its fullest form, the List begins with (the building of) Eridu and ends with (the destruction of) Isin, that is, it records the entire history of 'The City.'" Hallo, *Antediluvian Cities*, 66. For pertinent information on SKL, see Hallo, *Origins*, 15; Piotr Steinkeller, "An Ur III Manuscript of the Sumerian King List," in *Literatur, Politik Und Recht in Mesopotamien: Festschrift Für Claus Wilcke*, ed. Walther Sallaberger, Konrad Volk, and Annette Zgoll (Wiesbaden, D: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003), 268 and 281–284; Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 5. For the reasons why historians question the accuracy of SKL, see Stiebing and Helft, *Ancient Near Eastern History*, 48–53.

[218] Postgate, *Early Mesopotamia*, chap. 2, Kindle.

The SKL composition (the Weld-Blundell Prism version), consists of four distinctive sections, of which the first and the second are of particular interest. The first, antediluvian part (Lines 1–39) begins with, "When the kingship was lowered from heaven the kingship was in Eridu(g)."[220] Then the transfer of the kingship goes to Bad-tibira and, successively, to Larak, Sipar, and Shuruppak.[221] The beginning of second or the post-Deluge part (Lines 40–265) starts with almost identical wording: "After the Flood had swept thereover, when the kingship was lowered from heaven the kingship was in Kish."[222]

Jacobsen, thus, summarizes the ideology displayed in SKL as the "theory that Babylonia was and always had been a single kingdom... the capital could change from one city to another, but there was never more than one king at a time."[223] Markedly, the concept of kingship "was intimately connected with the idea of place... and was given by the gods not to an individual, nor to a family, a tribe, or a territory, but to a city." [224] Considering that the writings were not made for a wide public but for the projected, presumably royal, and/or scribal/scholarly audience,[225]

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[219] Gianni Marchesi, "The Sumerian King List and the Early History of Mesopotamia," *QVO* V (2010): 231.

[220] Peeter Espak explains SKL as Ur Dynasty propaganda. See, "The Establishment of Ur III Dynasty: From the Gutians to the Formation of the Neo-Sumerian Imperial Ideology and Pantheon," in *Kings, Gods and People: Establishing Monarchies in the Ancient World*, ed. Thomas R. Kammerer, Mait Koiv, and Sazonov Vladimir (Münster, DE: Ugarit Verlag, 2016), 97–105.

[221] On peculiarities of the first part, see Thorkild Jacobsen, *Sumerian King List* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1939), 69–141; Hallo, *Antediluvian Cities*, 61–62; Raul E. Lopez, "The Antediluvian Patriarchs and the Sumerian King List," *CENTJ* 12, no. 3 (1998): 350; Jean-Jacques Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, ed. Benjamin R. Foster (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 55–56 and 117–18.

[222] On peculiarities of the second part, see. Mallowan, *Early Dynastic Period*, 243–44. Jean-Jacques Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, ed. Benjamin R. Foster (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 55–56 and 117–18; Piotr Michalowski, "History as Charter: Some Observations on the Sumerian King List," *JAOS* 103, no. 1 (1983): 242–43.

[223] Jacobsen, *Sumerian King List*, 138–40.

[224] Michael Roaf, "Mesopotamian Kings and the Built Environment," in *Experiencing Power, Generating Authority: Cosmos, Politics, and the Ideology of Kingship in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia*, ed. Jane A. Hill, Philip Jones, and Antonio J. Morales (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2013), 333.

[225] Documents were written for specialized archives and royal and private libraries, not for public access

the inclusion of the ancient sources (the list of the antediluvian rulers), and the probable belief in the historicity of the incorporated sources by its contemporaries, the SKL's ideological and religious aim and accomplishment are remarkable. Thus, the List represents one of the most important Mesopotamian documents. It asserts that the kingship: (a) has a divine source; (b) is of venerated and trusted antiqueness;[226] (c) belongs to the historical memory; (d) is authoritative; and (e) ties the kingship to the city as an indelible reality as the gods designed it. Therefore, the mythological past is connected to the political "present" in a pregnant and formative way.[227]

The City in Akkadian Literature

Although Akkadian literature grew on the rich Sumerian substratum,[228] it reflects great creativity and abounds with additional genres that are not attested among the Sumerian works. However, the already familiar kinds of writings are definitely present and follow, in many respects, identical and/or similar theological tangents. Thus, creation myths, mytho-epic poems, disputations, and laments preserve the age-long traditions and concepts related to the city and carry them forward both in space and time.[229]

The God-Lists

AN:dA-nu-um and TCL XV 10 or "Genouillac List"

The name of the list, *AN:dA-nu-um*, indicates a classical family of the lists that,[230] unlike

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and reading. See, John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Scripture: Ancient Literary Culture and Biblical Authority* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 20.

[226] On its programmatic nature, see Marchesi, *Early History of Mesopotamia*, 234.

[227] Gianni Marchesi, "The Sumerian King List or the 'History' of Kingship in Early Mesopotamia," *ANETD* IV, no. 11 (November 2016), accessed April 2, 2022, https://tinyurl.com/2cr74dcy. Influence and echoes of SKL can be found in many later Mesopotamian writings; some versions of the List were produced even during the LB period, and much later in the works of Berossus. Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 57–58.

[228] The interplay between the two traditions was so intense and fruitful that their fusion can be referred to as a Sumero-Akkadian hybrid. Foster, BM, 46–47.

[229] On characteristics of Akkadian literature and literary periods, see Foster, BM, passim.

[230] The God Lists are usually classified as mythological texts simply because they talk about the gods.

the Sumerian, which followed the Enlil convention, starts with An. This MA/MB text[231] is quite complex, despite the fact that it contains only an inventory of various divine names followed by descriptive appellatives.[232] *AN:dA-nu-um*, thus, begins with different names of An and his consort, Urash, that reflect their various aspects and relationships, such as family ties, office, function, and the like. Thus, An is Anshar-gal or "Great Whole Sky," but also En-uru-ulla, or "Lord of the Primeval City." Likewise, Urash is Belet-ili or "Queen of the Gods" and, also, "Nin-uru-ulla" or "Mistress of the Primeval City."[233] However, these same appellatives appear in the older OB *TCL XV 10* god-list; this fact points to the possible older tradition behind them and, also, indicates the preservation of the particular cosmological beliefs. In short, the embryonic universe was conceived as the city (uru-ulla) where An (en-uru-ulla) came into being and commenced the other acts of creation.[234]

An = *Anum* God List

An = *Anum* is a greatly enlarged, altered, and more systematic document from the late OB period. Although it follows the basic outline of *TCL XV*, it changes theogony present in the *TCL XV* document in several fundamental ways. Thus, heaven and earth do not preexist or are created but appear by emersion. Then, Urash is An's predecessor; consequently, An and Enlil are

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During Assyro-Babylonian times, the lists reflected different priorities and were ordered accordingly to suit the current theological affinities. However, they replicated the ancient patterns and echoed the voices of the classical past.

[231] *TCL XV 10* is much older than *AN:dA-nu-um* list; however, the preservation of theology was the reason to give it a relative priority.

[232] Johannes J. W. Lisman, "At the Beginning... Cosmogony, Theogony and Anthropogony in Sumerian Texts of the Third and Second Millennium BCE" (PhD diss., Leiden, NL, Leiden, 2013), 9–12.

[233] However, the inner logic calls for the arrangement of the list based on both vertical genealogy (gods who fill the embryonic universe) and horizontal genealogy (the expansions of divine families). The accompanying functional designations offer theogonic, cosmogonic, cosmological, and other summaries and elucidate them in the process. Richard L. Litke, *A Reconstruction of the Assyro-Babylonian God-Lists AN:DA-Nu-Um and AN:Anu Šá Amēli* (New Haven, CT: Yale Babylonian Collection, 1998), 20–23.

[234] Van Dijk, *Le Motif Cosmique*, 13–14.

not related at all; instead, they are presented as equal. Importantly, these changes completely remove the notion of the primeval city.[235] Thus, the An = *Anum* list follows the changes in political ideology that, over time, have increasingly relegated the universe-as-city concept out of the mainstream flow of scholarly and religious speculations.

Creation Myths

The Dunnu Theogony (The Harab Myth) [236]

The Harab Myth is a short and stark account of the descent and succession of gods that relates the divine actors to the obscure city of Dunnu. The primary deity in the myth, Harab ("the plow"), with his son Sumuqan (a "cattle god"), created Dunnu ("fort, fortress") as one of his creational acts.[237] The city is appropriated with several formulaic appellatives in the text: the "eternal city," the "heavenly pristine city," and the "ancient capital city." These names indicate the preexistence of the city[238] and this point is enforced by the consecutive creation of the additional elements necessary for life later on in the myth.[239]

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[235] Clifford, *Creation Accounts*, 21–22.

[236] Concerning pertinent information on the myth, see Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths*, 387; Jacobsen, CS. 402.

[237] The names of the principal personages, the primordial deities, are symbolic, and such is the case with their activities. According to Lambert, Harab could be "heaven" in accordance with the prevailing pattern of the heaven-earth marriage in Mesopotamian myths. Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths*, 387 and 391. Thus, Harab ("the plow") and Earth comprise the first preexisting couple, the original progenitors from which proceeds the divine posterity: "In the beginning, [Harab married Earth.] Family and lord[ship he founded.]" Translation by W.W. Hallo, CS, 403. They are followed by deities related to fertility, agriculture, herding, seasonal cycles, and civilized life, as their names indicate. Patrick D. Miller, "Eridu, Dunnu, and Babel: A Study in Comparative Mythology," *HAR*, no. 9 (1985): 235. The preexistence of the land is likewise assumed, while the creative act that brings the cosmic elements into existence is described as analogous to the simple act of making a furrow with a plow. Even the birth of the next generation of gods is a result of "plowing." Harab and Sumuqan (a "cattle god"), the father and the son, create Dunnu ("fort, fortress") as the third creational act. The meanings covered by the word *dunnu*, also include "strength, violence, foundation." ASD 3, D. According to Lambert's rendering of the text, Harab and Earth created Dunnu. Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths*, 393.

[238] Hallo writes that "in the final analysis, the concepts of eternal city and first, head or capital city converge, not only in their common Akkadian equivalent *alu elu*, lofty city, but also in the notion of a 'pristine heavenly city' (uru-sag-an-na) named, according to a lexical text, Dunnum. . . . In mythological terms, however, it was the cosmic 'eternal city' ([UR]U sa-a-tu), built by Heaven and Earth themselves. It is their third and climactic creation in a newly published myth which begins, sure enough, with 'in the beginning' (i-na re-e[š- ...]) and

The myth continues by saying that Harab assumed a single rule over Dunnu and, thereby, introduced the lordship and the kingship to the city. This seemingly peaceful and serene development is brought to an abrupt and disturbing end. The mother goddess engages in an incestuous relationship with her son, Sumuqan. This betrayal of fidelity and changed loyalties result in patricide: Sumuqan kills his father Harab and marries his mother.[240]

The conclusion of the first part of the myth is very unusual and quite surprising: "in Dunnu which he loved he laid him to rest." The ambiguous pronoun reference can be understood in two ways, and both of them, strangely, make much sense. So, Harab does not like his wife and children but loves Dunnu! Or, Sumuqan does not love his father but loves the city! At any rate, Sumuqan's act introduces a chain of divine successions in which the young gods of the city of Dunnu achieve their authority and jurisdiction through acts of incest, patricide, bigamy, and matricide afflicted on the old gods.[241] In the midst of the ongoing carnage within the divine family, creation continues as a part of the effort to ensure the provision of gods. Despite the incessant parade of divinities and rulers, the only constant is the lasting presence of the city.

The symbolic language of the myth alludes to the fact that the city was the product of the conjunction between agriculture and herding and that economic urges necessitated the existence of a fortified urban center. Dunnu is so important that it is set within the environment of the

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continues with a complicated theogony set in the primordial past. And that is, I daresay, as far back as even the cuneiform sources will allow us to trace our urban origins." Hallo, *Antediluvian Cities*, 66.

[239] It would be important to note at this point that some texts call the father of all gods from whom the whole divine family sprouts, An, "lord of the eternal city" or "lord of the primeval city," which places city in the context of the pre-creation state. Hallo, *Origins*, 13.

[240] Jacobsen carefully expresses the belief that the patricide motif may be uniquely Akkadian. Jacobsen, *Treasures of Darkness*, 167–68. However, patricide and the attempt at filicide are found in another Akkadian text—*Enuma Elish*.

[241] The influence of *The Harab Myth* on the theological speculations of ANE peoples is enormous. The motif of divine succession through incest and murder is found among the Hittites, Canaanites, and finally the Greeks. Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA; London, Britain: Harvard University Press, 1976), 41–42.

ongoing theogony, which, together with various appellatives, hints at her divine status.[242]

Enuma Elish (The Babylonian Epic of Creation)[243]

Enuma Elish is often referred to as a piece of Babylonian Marduk propaganda, but in general terms, it gives a literary testimony of the rising dominance and absolute authority of the earthly ruler.[244] Briefly speaking, Marduk, the main actor in the myth, addresses the assembly of gods at the moment of crisis and expresses his willingness to deal with the challenge under the condition that they will give him the undisputed power of decision making.[245] Since the kingship shines out as the background motif of the myth yet is prominently employed as a vehicle for the legitimization of Marduk's divine supremacy,[246] the place and role of city within this construct become very interesting.

The myth commences with a description of the primordial state of preexisting undifferentiated matter with two divine being, Apsu and Tiamat.[247] Consequently, the line "When the heavens above did not exist... earth... not come into being,"[248] does not rule out the existence of Apsû and Tiāmat, "who gave birth to them all."[249] Thus, *Enuma Elish* does not

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[242] The high view of the city points to the Sumerian sources, while the elements of theomachy indicate Akkadian influences; thus, the probable time of the original composition is sometime during the OB period.

[243] Concerning pertinent information on the text of the myth, see Schneider, *Assyrian and Babylonian Religion*, 62.

[244] *Enuma Elish* is often referred to as *The Babylonian Epic of Creation*. It is a liturgical text that was recited annually during the Akitu festival, or the Babylonian New Year, as a part of the renewal of the cosmos ritual. However, the components of the story are very particular and complex, as they represent an amalgamation of some very old concepts. Scholars have determined that the theogonic elements of the narrative can be traced to Sumerian sources, but theomachy and patricide are rather Akkadian traits. Jacobsen, *Treasures of Darkness*, 167.

[245] Frankfort, *Kingship and Gods*, 220–21.

[246] See Jacobsen, *Sumerian King List*, 138–40.

[247] Frankfort, *Kingship and Gods*, 232–34.

[248] (Tablet I). Wilfred G. Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 51.

[249] The introduction is obviously an allegory that sprouts from the prolonged observing of the alluvial accretion of silt, which causes the expansion of land in the delta of Tigris and Euphrates. This natural process made the Mesopotamian speculate about the origin of the universe by positing the same activity backward in time.

postulate creation ex nihilo.[250]

The stage act of the creative process, which is theogony, commences after the act of engendering the heavens and the earth. Apsu and Tiamat form the first couple of gods, thus bringing them into existence. However, there is a conflict between the old (inert chaos) and the young (active order) gods that introduces theomachy, which ends in failed filicide and successful patricide.[251] Apsu is killed, and Tiamat, enraged by the husband's murder, contrives revenge, and the war begins.

Marduk accepts the challenge to battle Tiamat under the condition that his participation in the struggle should be rewarded with the kingship, which the assembly of gods would bestow upon him. So, he calls on the gods to proclaim for him "an exalted destiny," whereby he becomes the supreme ruler whose decisions may not be "nullified or altered."[252] The text clearly indicates that the gods behave as a city-state polity, even as a confederation of the city-states. The already established deities from various cult centers assemble together, discuss the current affair, make decisions, and elect the military leader. So, they concede to Marduk's proposal, and declare him the king of gods, and confer all power and absolute authority on him.[253]

Marduk's subsequent victory over Tiamat signals the transition from theogony to cosmogony. The young hero's successful struggle against the powers of chaos marks the commencement of world creation and ordering, which culminates with the invention of humans

[250] In a similar manner, the observation and reflection over the political processes behind the functionality and orderliness of society enabled speculation regarding the origin of order in the universe. After Jacobsen, *Treasures of Darkness*, 169–70. Following this line of thought, the Sumerian tradition puts a greater emphasis on creation as a divine act of introduction of the proper arrangement to the elements of the preexisting chaotic environment. See Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 232.

[251] Jacobsen relates the increased cruelty among deities to the increasingly tumultuous political situation toward the first millennium and onward that resulted in the "politization of gods who come to embody more and more the political interests of their cities and countries." Jacobsen, *Treasures of Darkness,* 231.

[252] (Tablet II). Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths*, 73.

[253] (Tablet IV). Ibid., 87.

and civilization. Accordingly, Marduk commissions gods with the task of building a city for him, Babylon; yet, in his magnanimity, he creates man to toil instead of the gods and, thus, makes them free for their cosmic administrative duties. Regardless, the grateful gods take action and build Babylon and its temple.[254]

Following Marduk's victory, the stage is set to shape the order of the universe with its distinctive features: (a) the cult centers are established; (b) the time division is set; (c) the movements of the celestial bodies are determined; and (d) humans are created to serve the gods.[255] The sequence of the creative phases moves from the initial chaos and theogony through theomachy and the ensuing cosmogony to anthropogony. Although explicitly singled out as "the" city, Babylon is far from being the only city in *Enuma Elish*. The cosmology of the early primordial divine society in the myth corresponds to the embryonic universe envisioned as the city with the agreeing polity. Moreover, the fact that older and already established deities reside in their own residences implies the existence of the corresponding estates. The building of Babylon and its temple by the thankful gods is obviously the crowning event of Marduk's victory and the pinnacle of cosmogony. Still, in the myth, they serve to legitimize Marduk's kingship as the supreme god of Mesopotamia. Therefore, the theology and ideology of the city during the MB and LB periods reflect ideas from the more archaic past in a quite essential way.

The Founding of Eridu (The Babylonian Genesis)

One of the probably most controversial myths due to its deliberate interplay of the names and features of the two important cities in Babylonian history and religious tradition, Eridu and Babylon, is *The Founding of Eridu*.[256] The major theme of the writing is the exaltation of

[254] See Jacobsen, *Treasures of Darkness*, 180–81.

[255] Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia*, 228.

[256] Concerning pertinent information on the text of the myth, see Hallo, *Origins*, 14; Alexander Heidel, *The*

Marduk and the justification of his kingship over the gods of Babylon.[257]

The introduction describes the initial emptiness and the ocean-like state of the world.[258] This void is curiously but not unexpectedly explained in terms of the nonexistence of temples and cities as divine proper abodes.[259] Indeed, the structure of the opening section is such that the temple lines envelop the lines emphasizing the non-existence of life and the cities within the context of the proper habitation for gods.[260]

It is striking that in both texts, this embryonic pre-creation state is defined by the non-existence of the cities and their corresponding gods. According to the *Babylonian Genesis*, the first act of creation that breaks with this nonentity is the making of Eridu.[261] Immediately after follows the building of Esagil, the temple of Marduk in Babylon; so, first "Eridu was made" then "Esagil was created... Babylon was made, Esagil was completed."[262]

Babylonian Genesis: The Story of Creation, 2nd ed. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 61; Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths*, 366–67.

[257] Heidel, *Babylonian Genesis*, 61.

[258] The mode of creation that corresponds to the natural accumulation of silt and consequent extension of the south Sumerian coastline betrays the environment of Eridu. Though the sequence of creation may at times be loose when it serves as a general introduction to the myth, at other times it is very particular when it expresses the priorities. In this case, the founding of the Eridu myth twice postulates that Eridu and Babylon were made before the building of their temples.

[259] "A pure temple, a temple of the gods, had not been made in a pure place... Nippur had not been made, Ekur had not been created... But all the lands were sea." Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths*, 371–75.

[260] Based on the Eridu line, Hallo proposes a direct connection between the myth and a pre-Sargonic OS fragment of a hymn or a lament that displays enigmatic similarity, as it points to a time when "Enki and Eridu(!) had not appeared." Hallo, *World's Oldest Literature*, 548–49.

[261] On Babylon assuming traditions that previously belonged to Eridu and, thus, taking on the name Eridu, see Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths*, 200–1.

[262] It is interesting that, according to the creation order described in the myth, the city and the temple precede theogony, cosmogony, and, ultimately, anthropogony. The text says that Marduk "made the Anunnaki gods," and they named "the pure city in which they were pleased to dwell." These inaugural creative steps prepare the scene for the creation of man, the dry land, the animals, and all other features that comprise the landscape of Mesopotamia. The line "Marduk constructed a raft... made earth and heaped it up on the raft" is analogous to the way the floating islands are still made in the Tigris-Euphrates delta to this very day. Understandably, everything is on a colossal scale, and thus the created soil is populated with elements that are foundational for agriculture and herding and play an important part in the temple economy. Everything is ready, so Marduk makes "a terrace on the edge of the sea," which is the temple platform, and also "he turned the reed-beds into dry land," which apparently refers to irrigation.

In a quite peculiar twist, at the very end, Marduk "created the brick-mold" and, consequently, the brick, which is the principal building material in Mesopotamia and essential for the construction of the temples and the cities. So, the myth starts with the formal statement of the non-existence of the cities and the temples and ends with a list related to the establishment of the major cultic sites in Babylonia.[263]

Epics

Atrahasis (Atra-Hasis)[264]

The introductory lines of the Atrahasis[265] epic reiterate the motif of divine hard work on the maintenance of the installations essential for urban life (Tablet I, Col. i).[266] The solution for the ensuing tension is anthropogeny, whereby men are introduced into the world as a substitute for the gods (Tablet I, Col. iv), so that men can assume the labor (Tablet I, Col. vii). However, in time, this solution creates a problem of its own (Tablet I, Col. vii), and the gods attempt to reduce the number of humans[267] through sickness, thirst, hunger, debilitating drought, every kind of plague, pestilence, and finally a flood.

The epic does not provide much detail that would offer a complete picture of the living

[263] This final reversal to the building of the cities and the temples serves the purpose of turning attention to the purification incantation that follows in the text. However, the deliberate way the poem is structured leaves the impression that the section, which puts stress on the archetypal city and the temple and their preexistence in the divine realm before the creation of the universe, belongs to a once independent-cosmogony oriented source. Lambert argues for the late 3rd millennium BC Sumerian origin of the myth and attributes changes to Babylon and Esagil to the editorial work of the Babylonian scribes. Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths*, 368–69.

[264] Concerning pertinent information on the text of the myth, see Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia*, 1–4; Piotr Michalowski, "Presence at the Creation," in *Lingering Over Words: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Literature in Honor of William L. Moran*, ed. Tzvi Abusch, John Huehnergard, and Piotr Steinkeller (Atlanta, GA: Brill, 1990), 385–89.

[265] Atrahasis was considered one of the seven pre-Flood sages and the king of Shuruppak, according to *The Sumerian Flood Story*.

[266] The work is related to the effort of digging the canals and their maintenance. Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia*, 10.

[267] On the same motif in *Enuma Elish* and its implications, see Michalowski, *Presence at the Creation*, 385–89.

conditions, such as the intricacies of the social structure and its constituents. However, some elements are observable, such as frequent referring to the irrigation canals, the elders and assemblies, the temples, the construction of the temples, and the temple worship, which clearly indicate a rich and flourishing city life. Thus, *Atrahasis* implies a developed urban context, which is placed in (a) the formative pre-human state of the universe, then, after the creation of man, in (b) the pre-flood and (c) the post-flood world populated with men. Likewise, throughout the whole poem, the divine realm operates as polity, which is reflected in its judicial, executive, and other operational attributes. These elements suggest that the city, with its institutions, represents the conceptual framework that defines and envelops both divine and human existence.[268]

Etana

Tablet I of the epic[269] describes the higher and lesser gods acting as polity as they assemble together and devise a plan and proceed to build a city (Kish) for men and, also, to tailor the destiny of the humans.[270] Similarly, they plan to institute the kingship, which they want to bestow on Etana, so he can be their shepherd. *Etana*, just as the *Atrahasis* epic, preserves the established old traditions and carries them forward. So, the gods operated as a polity, founded the city, established the kingship, and set up the king to manage the city and shepherd the people.[271]

[268] Thematically, the Atrahasis poem corresponds in many respects to the *Sumerian Flood Story* and is complementary to it. Likewise, it reflects common concerns and traditions present in other Sumerian and Akkadian writings, thus attesting to the survival and continuation of a plethora of ancient concepts related in various ways to the city.

[269] Concerninf pertinent information on the text of the myth, see Foster, BM, 438.

[270] Though quite abbreviated, the LV introduction is somewhat clearer in how it describes the actions of the gods. Foster, BM, 448.

[271] Different versions of the poem demonstrate that these traditions were not handed over formally but that they were a source of animated reflection even during the LB period, when they were reinterpreted and/or clarified to better suit the ideological needs in an ever-changing environment. Foster, BM, 438–39.

Disputations

The Date Palm and the Tamarisk

The poem[272] follows some of the already familiar conventions. The one that draws the most attention is the mythological-historical introduction, to which ten lines in the two first passages are dedicated.[273] This section evokes the primordial era, when the world and its elements were constituted by gods. So, the land is established first, then cities are created, the mountains and rivers follow, and finally the divine council is set. The sequence of creation is progressive and moves from the most basic to a greater level of structure and order. The second passage moves onto historical times and the establishment of the kingship, the institution that is complementary to and directly related to the city. So, Kiš precedes the king, who is merely entrusted with its care, hinting at the post-Flood transfer of the seat of royal authority. All these elements reflect the already established traditions.[274]

Hymns

TIN.TIR = Babylon

The genre of *Tintir = Babylon* is disputed; however, based on its general characteristics, can be seen as a Sumerian-style temple hymn, though built around topographic elements.[275] This composition is believed to have been penned sometimes in the 2nd millennium BC but enjoyed

[272] Concerning pertinent information on the test of the myth, see Yoram Cohen, *Wisdom from the Late Bronze Age* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 177–80.

[273] Ibid., 181–89.

[274] The earlier versions of the poem, such as the OV or its contemporary MA recension, only infer the existence of the city prior to the king. However, the OV version alludes to the introduction of the *Atrahasis* epic, or, Tablet I of *Etana*, which is far more particular in this respect, thereby invoking the same imagery and its corollaries. See Foster, BM, 439 and 448; Cohen, *Wisdom from the Late Bronze Age*, 190–93.

[275] Niek Veldhuis, "TIN.TIR = Babylon, the Question of Canonization and the Production of Meaning," *JCS* 50 (1998): 77.

heightened popularity during the LA and LB (notably Hellenistic) periods.[276]

TIN.TIR = Babylon consists of five tablets, which by hermeneutical means assign to Babylon theological and cosmological significance.[277] Tablet I is particularly interesting since, in its introductory lines, which come directly from the lexical list, it enumerates about forty-nine Sumerian epithets translated into Akkadian and attributed to Babylon. Thus, Babylon is "the Bond of the Heavens" (Tablet I, 6); "called into Being by the Heavens" (7); "the City whose Brickwork is Ancient" (or primeval) (8); "the City of the King of the Gods" (12); "the City called into Being by Marduk" (13); "the Pole of Gold" (20); "the Entrance of the Mustering of the Gods" (22); "Grasps the Bridle of Heaven and Underworld" (23); "the Abode of Marduk" (28); "he Abode of Anu, Enlil and Ea" (29); "the Creator of God and Man" (30); "the Bond of Heaven and Underworld" (35); "the City of Goods and Property" (50).[278]

Essentially, *TIN.TIR = Babylon* is a concise summary of the ancient theology of the city applied to Babylon. So, Babylon is depicted in terms of divine estate, the temple, city-state polity, and deity. It is envisioned as a "cosmic capital" that "transcended the notion of a city as the seat of government for an empire, and carried religious and cosmological connotations."[279] As all major ideological and theological concepts are listed in the text, including the ideas in the remaining tablets, the composition preserves and, in its final editions, forwards the familiar ancient constructs about the city into the first millennia AD.

The City in Mesopotamian Hellenistic Literature

There are many Babylonian and/or Mesopotamian works that were penned after the fall

[276] Copies were found in Assurbanipal's library as well as in several Babylonian cities. Marijn S. Visscher, *Beyond Alexandria: Literature and Empire in the Seleucid World* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020), 74.

[277] Veldhuis, *TIN.TIR*, 82.

[278] Andrew R. George, *Babylonian Topographical Texts* (Leuven, B; Peeters, 1992), 39–41.

[279] Visscher, *Beyond Alexandria*, 74.

of Babylon during the Achaemenid, Parthian, and especially Seleucid periods of rule over the region. During that time, literary works were written by various authors for a diverse audience.[280] Very little that was written in Greek and survived was penned by a Babylonian author, Berossus.

Berossus (born c. 350?–370? BC), a contemporary of Alexander of Macedonia, was an ethnic Chaldean and a priest of Bel in Babylon. As a proud and highly educated Mesopotamian of noble descent, he was appalled by the chauvinism and ignorance of the new rulers of his country, the Greeks and the Macedonians. To correct widespread misrepresentations and wrong ideas about the history, beliefs, and traditions of Babylon and her people, he wrote (finished in 281 BC) a comprehensive work in Greek, which he titled *Babyloniaca*. The now-lost work consisted of three tomes, of which the first contained presentations and explanations of Babylonian cosmology and the flood; the second tome narrated the ancient pre- and post-flood history of Babylon; and the third gave an account of the newer history of Babylon, concluding with Antiochus I.

The exposition of the Babylonian cosmology of Berossus reflects the ancient traditions that present gods as the source of human skills, knowledge, jurisprudence, architecture, and government. Writing about Oannes in the prologue of *Babyloniaca*, he says

> It gave to the men the knowledge of letters and sciences and crafts of all types. It also taught them how to found cities, establish temples, introduce laws and measure land. It also revealed to them seeds and the gathering of fruits, and in general it gave men everything which is connected with the civilized life. From the time of that beast nothing further has been discovered.[281]

Moreover, Oannes was the first to write down the foundational documents related to the

[280] Ibid., 71.

[281] Translation by Stanley M. Burstein, *The Babyloniaca of Berossus*, SANE 1 (Malibu, CA: Undena Publications, 1978), 13–14.

beginnings and functions of the universe.[282] Writing about Bel (Marduk), Berossus echoes *Enuma Elish* by attributing the walls of Babylon to divine creative action.[283] Essentially, the fragments of Berossus corroborate the scholarly conclusion that the ancient theological concepts and ideology, which viewed gods as the originators of the city and the city-based civilization, survived until late antiquity.[284]

The City in Mesopotamian Eschatology

The knowledge of the ancient Mesopotamian beliefs about the afterlife is rather accidental due to the diffusion of the subject in various texts and the general paucity of writings that approach the issue in any way. When it comes to Sumerian literature, the most extant passages on the topic of the post-mortem human state are contained in *The Descent of Inanna*, *The Death of Ur-Nammu*, and *Gilgamesh and the Huluppu Tree*.[285] The hope of the Mesopotamian related to life appears to be tied to this earth, while ideas about the afterlife are at best vague and uncertain. Death was seen as a terminal event with a bleak and miserable future,

[282] Gerald P. Verbrugghe and John M. Wickersham, *Berossos and Manetho, Introduced and Translated: Native Traditions in Ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 44.

[283] "Contrary to the conventional Greek view of the early Hellenistic period that civilization was a historical phenomenon, the product of human action over time and to be explained in naturalistic terms, Berosus held to the traditional Mesopotamian view that civilization was not a product of history at all. Instead, its core was a body of basic principles (me) dealing with the various areas of civilized life known to the gods and communicated by them to man at a particular place, Babylon, at a particular time, 432,000 years before the Flood. Before man received this knowledge, he lived as an animal without law; after he received it he was civilized. Civilization, thus, was the result of divine revelation, not human activity." Burstein, *Babyloniaca*, 7.

[284] "Berossos also in his first book tells how humans learned about what Marduk had done in creating order in the world from Oannes and other similar monsters from the sea. These monsters not only taught humans about creation but gave them the gift of civilization. Oannes and the others who are named in Berossos's text do not appear in ancient Semitic literary texts and are not mentioned with the antediluvian kings in king-lists. They are not, however, Berossos's creations. A late Babylonian tablet found at Uruk mentions these teachers of humans with antediluvian kings: the tablet is based on Sumerian mythology or speculation on it by Kassites (in the late second millennium B.C.) and Neo-Babylonians (in the early first millennium B.C.)." Verbrugghe and Wickersham, *Berossos and Manetho*, 17.

[285] There are many minor references related to the Netherworld in literary works and inscriptions, such as boundary markers. See John H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), chap. 14. Kindle.

of which not much was known.[286]

The general belief was that the Netherworld was a part of a greater whole that comprised the universe. As was the case with the realms above, it was ruled by the gods, particularly by the queen Ereshkigal and her husband Nergal. They were assisted by the Anunnaki gods who were also in charge of the judgment and destiny of the dead. As John Walton properly observes, the Underworld, "politically and architecturally it was construed as a city."[287]

The City in Sumerian Myths as They Relate to the Netherworld

Enki Organizes the World (Enki and the World Order)

The aforementioned NS mythical poem, *Enki Organizes the World*, is an origin myth or a myth about the arrangement of the world, particularly the world of the living. However, it contains a brief yet very curious line regarding the Underworld. This line is dedicated to Utu, the Sun god, which quite peculiarly calls him "the father of the Great City." This designation, "Great City," in Sumerian *iri-gal*, actually means: Netherworld. The explanation of the Utu's title, or the appellative "father of the Great City," offers a clue that sheds some light on how the Sumerians envisioned the Underworld. According to ancient cosmology, different realms were seen as a succession of parallel mirror images;[288] per this view, the Netherworld was the reflection of Heaven, with the earth of man between them.[289] Thus, the Sun traverses Heaven during the day and the Netherworld during the night. Since the heavenly realm is structured as a city, it is natural that the Netherworld as its counterpart is understood in likewise terms; thus, the rationale

[286] Expression "Mesopotamian eschatology" is a conditional expression with a quite narrow view that is focused on the eternal destiny of man according to available literary works.

[287] Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought*, chap. 14, Kindle.

[288] The developed Babylonian cosmology contains Sumerian elements without alteration. See William F.Warren, "Babylonian and Pre-Babylonian Cosmology," *JAOS* 22 (1901): passim. Compare with Hugo Radau, "The Cosmology of the Sumerians," *The Monist* 13, no. 1 (October 1902): passim.

[289] Jean Bottéro, *Mesopotamia: Writing, Reasoning, and the Gods*, trans. Zainab Bahrani and Marc Van De Mieroop (Chicago, IL; London, UK: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 273.

for the Utu's name becomes obvious.[290] In turn, we learn that the "Great City" was one of the early Sumerian metaphors for the Underworld.[291]

The Descent of Inanna (Inanna's Descent to the Underworld)[292]

This two-part poetic narrative can be characterized as an origin myth. In its complete form, namely, in the second part, it explains the seasonal fertility cycle, which is connected to the annual descent of Dumuzi and his sister Geshtinana to the Underworld. The abrupt beginning of the first part simply states that Inanna approaches Ganzer, the wall and gate-protected palace of her sister, goddess Ereshkigal, trying to force her way in.[293] The servant keeps Inanna at the main gate that leads to the palace, which is obviously a temple. The seven gates and the seven walls that encircle the palace recall the usual layout of the Sumerian inner city, with the temple complex in its midst.[294] This urban depiction of Ereshkigal's abode, likewise, assumes the estate that surrounds a terrestrial royal manor.

As the myth progresses, Inanna is stripped of her divine powers, becomes mortal, and is subjected to the judgment and condemnation to death by the seven Anunnaki who assist her fearsome sister.[295] This detail reflects the city-state polity, with the council performing judicial

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[290] On the complexities related to Utu, the Netherworld, Enki, and Abzu, see Espak, *God Enki*, 181–82.

[291] The urban ground plan separated Mesopotamian cities into three parts: the Temple district, the residential area, or the city of the living, and the cemetery, or the city of the dead. See Jeremias, *Babylonian Conception of Heaven and Hell*, 17–18.

[292] *The Descent of Inanna* comes from the Nippur library and, by its characteristics, belongs to the NS writings of the Ur III Dynasty preserved by the OB scribal school. See Diane Wolkstein and Samuel N. Kramer, *Inanna, Queen of Heaven and Earth: Her Stories and Hymns from Sumer* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1983), 127.

[293] LAS, 67–68.

[294] As Katz observes, "the fortified cities, had no more than three gates: an outer, middle, and inner. Architecturally, therefore, this description is exceptional and incomparable with the structure of the terrestrial city-states." However, the seven gates seem to be a rather symbolic number furnished to fit the purposes of the story's plot and are not attested in any other similar narrative or poem, except in its Akkadian counterpart. On the other hand, the seven gates of the Netherworld have corresponding seven gates of heaven in OB *Myth of Etana*. See Dina Katz, *The Image of the Netherworld in the Sumerian Sources* (Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2003), 192–93.

[295] See ANET, 52 n.8.

duties under the panel of seven elders. Although Inanna eventually escapes her terrible fate, the myth presents the Netherworld as a city where mortals are judged and condemned to death, which is their inevitable destiny, and the city becomes the place of their eternal confinement.

The City in Sumerian Hymns as They Relate to the Netherworld

A Hymn to Nungal (Nungal in Ekur)

A very intricate NS text from the OB Nippur stash found in House F[296] is *A Hymn to Nungal*, a minor Underworld deity who was believed to be the daughter of An and Ereshkigal. Her position and duties are still debated, yet it seems clear from the hymn that "she keeps an eye on the judgments and decisions, distinguishing true and false." Besides this judicial function, she is also titled "the warden of the prison" later in the text.

The hymn appears to be written by a scribe who had committed a capital crime and ended up in prison. The text is divided into two even parts of which the first (1–61) is a cry of a terrified man who compares jail to the Netherworld, while the second part (62–121) claims that incarceration has a redemptive value. The comparisons given in the first part are very curious and call for closer attention. The introductory lines of the hymn deliver a generous amount of epithets and metaphors related to the prison house, all of which are given in terms of the Netherworld.[297] Line 9 that says "house, with a great name, Underworld, mountain where Utu rises" is specifically interesting, since "Underworld," or, as other translations render it, "nether world," is *iri-gal*, or the "Great City," the expression that we already encountered.

[296] House F represents a very particular list of writings and a curricular collection found at this specific spot. See Eleanor Robson, "The Tablet House: A Scribal School in Old Babylonian Nippur," *RAAO* 93, no. 1 (2001): passim, cf. 53 and 55.

[297] LAS, 339. ETCSL 4.28.1 contains minor differences.

The City in Sumerian Epics as They Relate to the Netherworld

Death of Bilgames[298]

The story begins with Gilgamesh lying delirious on his deathbed. Enki causes him to have a dream in which the destiny of the hero is revealed: Death is inevitable even to a king; thus, Gilgamesh is going to die. At some point in the dream, Enlil appears and speaks to the dying hero, "The darkest day of mortal man has caught up with you... But do not go down to the Great City with heart knotted (in anger). (There) in the Great City, dwell] governors and kings, there chiefs of the armies [lie,]"[299] Quite in accordance with the already-seen examples, the expression "Great City" is repeatedly used in the narrative as a designation for the Netherworld. Considering that the traditions behind Sumerian Bilgames or Gilgamesh stories date back to at least the ED III Period, the name "Great City" as an established and almost conventional metaphor for the Underworld and the concept behind it evidently have great antiquity.

The City in Sumerian Royal Hymns as They Relate to the Netherworld

The Death of Urnamma

The hymn consists of several distinctive parts that follow the sequence of the king's death, his burial, the arrival to the Underworld, his offerings to the deities, the installation as a judge of the dead, his lament, the final doxology, and the posthumous fame declaration. The central part of the composition, which deals with Urnamma's arrival in the Underworld and his offerings to the deities he encounters there, is the richest in terms of allusions to the Netherworld as an urban area.

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[298] Short narratives, such as *Gilgamesh and the Bull of Heaven*, *Gilgamesh and Huwawa*, *The Death of Gilgamesh*, *Gilgamesh and Agga*, and *Gilgamesh and the Netherworld*, are OB copies of the Ur III Period originals. All these stories are independent and disconnected, and their story lines were only later perused with great modification to be finally integrated into the Akkadian great Gilgamesh epic. See Jeffrey H. Tigay, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic* (Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 2002), 24–28.

[299] The Nippur version of the text. Andrew R. George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh: The Babylonian Epic Poem and Other Texts in Akkadian and Sumerian* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1999), 200–1.

Urnamma, similarly as in *Inanna's Descent*, first encounters the seven guardians at the entrance to the Netherworld, where he "gives presents to the seven chief porters of the netherworld."[300] Shortly after, Urnamma presents the appropriate gifts to the nine Netherworld deities in their respective palaces, starting with Nergal, the king of the realm of the dead and the husband of Ereshkigal. One of the names that are alternatively used in this section of the hymn for the realm of the dead is Arali, likely a form of the Sumerian uru-ulla, "the primordial city."

Katz writes that the description of the Netherworld in the hymn corresponds to the usual urban single- or double-encircled temple district with shrines for the gods residing there. Even the king's offerings echo the temple ritual procedures. On the other hand, she properly observes that the conceptualization of the Netherworld based on the familiar architectural urban reality[301] needs additional support.[302] However, the cumulative evidence from the text, which goes beyond mere architecture, prompts Katz to affirm that the hymn's imagery reflects very ancient urban institutions and offices.[303] Therefore, based on the constellation of various abstract (social) and physical (architectural) elements, she concludes that the hymn evokes memory of the city-state context prior to the third millennium BC.[304]

Katz's assessment and conclusions, which are primarily inferred from Sumerian material such as *Inanna's Descent* and *The Death of Urnamma*, are important for several reasons. They suggest that (a) the understanding of the Netherworld in urban terms could likely predate the ED

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[300] Esther Fluckinger-Hawker, *Urnamma of Ur in Sumerian Literary Tradition* (Fribourg, CH: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 115.

[301] Katz, *Image of the Netherworld*, 194.

[302] She warns, though, that the architectural elements that are usually the earmarks of an urban setting, such as walls, gates, and temple-palaces, still do not warrant that the Underworld was conceptualized as a city or a city-state but rather as a temple complex. However, for a valuable discussion on why the Netherworld is a city and not a temple, see Wayne Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1998), 351.

[303] Katz, *Image of the Netherworld*, 194. Likewise, Bottero, *Mesopotamia*, 274.

[304] Katz, *Image of the Netherworld*, 195–96.

period; as such, it does not represent an OB innovation; (b) OB copies of NS texts accurately preserve some very ancient traditions; and (c) there are possible traces of the further OB theological development that, however, follows the tangent set by the established tradition.[305]

The City in Akkadian Myths Related to the Netherworld

Descent of Ishtar to the Nether World (Underworld)

The Akkadian myth *Descent of Ishtar to the Nether World* looks like an abbreviated version of NS, *The Descent of Inanna*.[306] Although the text is accommodated to meet a ritual purpose, it essentially preserves the plot from the longer Sumerian variant. So, Ishtar passes through the seven gates in order to get to Ereshkigal, and the doorman gives her passage and invites her to "enter... Cutha... the palace of the Land of no Return."[307] At this point, it is very important to note that the Babylonian city of Cutha (Kutha) was the worship center of Nergal, the god of the Netherworld.[308] Thus, the name of the real city, taken as a poetic reference for the seat of the god, became a synonym, an identifier, and the name for the Underworld.[309] It can be said that the basic theology of the Underworld as the city in the Akkadian *Descent of Ishtar to the Nether World*, when compared with the older Sumerian writings, remains unchanged.[310]

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[305] She suggests that the "position of the netherworld gods indicate that during the Old Babylonian period the notion of the netherworld as an urban community was still in the process of formation." Katz, *Image of the Netherworld*, 195.

[306] The poem that contains about a hundred and forty lines comes from Ashurbanipal's library in Nineveh, though it is also known from some other sources, both Assyrian and Babylonian. Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia*, 155.

[307] ANET, 107.

[308] On the various names of Nergal and his cult center in the city of Kutha that represented Hades; see Jeremias, *Babylonian Conception of Heaven and Hell*, 23–24.

[309] For an explanation that Nergal is contraction of the Sumerian title "Lord of the Great City," see Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography*, 293.

[310] Bottero observes that the chthonic deities are not dead but very much alive, living "in a subterranean citadel" a luxurious life equal to their celestial counterparts. He concludes that this "organization, transposed from the capital cities here on earth, apparently explains the name of Great-City, Metropolis, given to the Netherworld—a city in which even streets (sulu) were imagined to exist. Bottero, *Mesopotamia*, 277.

Conclusion

The task of this chapter was to observe the ideas and concepts related to the city in Mesopotamian literature. The analysis of selected writings demonstrates a high view of city that assigns it the central place and role in cosmology, theogony, cosmogony, and anthropogeny.

There are some important points to emphasize concerning this research. From the formal point of view: (a) the texts under investigation come from a variety of genres; (b) these writings were recorded during different historical periods; (c) the compositions originated from specific cultural environments; and (d) the passages related to the various aspects of the city are mostly found in the introductory lines or are contained within the larger textual units. Thus, the understanding of the place of city in Mesopotamian thought can be achieved only by the aggregation type of approach that requires a synthesis in order to discern the main ideological traits and assess them in an orderly way, attentive to the time and circumstances of their origin.

Ideas on the city in Mesopotamian writings can be distinguished and arranged by literary periods closely corresponding to the successive dominant cultural and political settings. Thus, the city in OS ED and Sargonic Literary Sources (pre- and post-2500 BC) appears as the essential cosmological element. The embryonic universe and cosmos in their function and operation are conceptualized as a city-state that constitutes (a) the proper and preferred habitat/estate of the gods and (b) the cradle of creation. These views reflect the belief that the changes within the human environment and their control are identical to the same or similar processes that govern the divine realm. Essentially, human abilities are attributed to the gods.

Ideas on the city in NS Ur III OB Literary Sources (c. 2100–1800 BC) become more nuanced as the old concepts are affirmed, expanded, and presented in a sequential way, starting with the preexisting universe and then moving from theogony and cosmogony to anthropogony.

The city appears in cosmogony as one of the first divinely created elements; consequently, the world of gods is conceptualized as a polity, which is a direct result of the sociomorphic tendencies that transpose the societal order onto the divine realm. It is important to observe that the city and the temple are conflated, yet the city comes before the temple in time and priority, with the temple being an attribute of the city. Humans do not exist in the proto-city but are eventually created in it to be servants of the gods and to maintain its infrastructure, economy, and cultus. At any rate, the Sumero-Akkadian view is that the city is the measure of civilization, a paradise.

The city in NS OB Literary Sources (c. 1800–1600 BC) reflects important political changes caused by the power struggle between the temple and the royal court. As a result, kingship appears in some writings as a divine design bestowed by the gods on the city as a necessary institution. The king becomes the undisputed master of the city and is in charge of all of its functions and institutions. The city in Akkadian OB/MA/MB/CB Literary Sources (c. 1800–1000 BC) fallows the existing ideology very closely, with the addition of some specific details that are particularly Semitic. Thus, theomachy is added to the creation sequence, reflecting the Akkadian/Amorite belief that the pre-embryonic state of the universe is marked by chaos. However, the place of the city in cosmogony remains the same, except that the creation of the city falls within the parameters of establishing order in the universe. Though the gods love the city, which is the rudiment of the previous ears, during this period the concept of the cosmos as structured as the city loses its appeal and is replaced by new ideological paradigms.

City in LA/LB and Greek Literary Sources (c. 1000 BC–100 AD) seem to have become defined by the almost canonical status assigned to the ancient writings. However, the idea of human/demigod (*apkallu*) agency in building cities and establishing civilization became

increasingly prominent toward and during the Hellenistic period.

The Netherworld as the city in OS/NS Literary Sources (c. 2500–1800 BC) is largely a reflection of an understanding of the universe as ruled by order and symmetry. It is conceptualized as a city-state and polity, thus, called the "Great City," and considered the final destination of the dead. The Akkadian literature (1800 BC–100 AD) follows the same trends.

The close analysis of selected texts points to the existence of several prevalent and reappearing themes and motifs that persisted irrespective of linguistic, cultural, social, and political transitions and influences. The Sumerian city-state has become a metaphor for the success and orderliness of both the universe and society and, therefore, the measure and defining point of divine and human existence. Anything outside or contrary to this establishment is tantamount to chaos, destruction, and death. In a properly structured universe and society, the city and the temple represent the cross-point where the vertical and cosmological axes meet, thus instituting and upholding order. Thus, kingship is a divine design bestowed by the gods on the city as a requisite institution to asseverate related processes that lead to that goal. Humans and the gods, therefore, find themselves working together on the same objectives, albeit at different levels and within strictly defined purviews, where man appears as a mere agent of divine will. Even death is not a slip into a chaos of nothingness but a passage to a state delimited by the boundaries of the "Great City," with its grim reality and minimal yet tangible orderliness.

The analysis of the selected passages in Sumerian and Akkadian literature also indicates that common Mesopotamian beliefs connate to the city form a triangle of dependencies in which the gods, the city with its temples, and kingship are intimately and deeply interconnected. The aspects of this relationship have shaped the theological and ideological ideas aimed both to explain natural phenomena and to meet some more pragmatic goals. Thus, the literary sources

bare evidence that changed concerns, priorities, and emphases related to cosmogonic, theogonic, and anthropogenic ideas happened in time either by their expansion, contraction, and/or expurgation. These tendencies affected cosmological and theological views in different ways and to different degrees; so, ED concepts are not identical with the views espoused during the late Kassite Period. On the other hand, the competition between various cultic and political centers and their own traditions that legitimize their primacy does not alter the common essential mytheme around which they are built.

The summary and analysis above underline some very important facts as far as Mesopotamian ideas related to the city are concerned: (a) the basic idea of the divine origin of the city and its being the measure of civilization remained unchanged throughout the history of the region; (b) the essential relationship of the city and the temple remained stable regardless of the circumstances; however, (c) the government structure of the city kept changing in time, thus relegating the concept of the city in the background of political and religious priorities.

Taking all these elements into consideration, this research demonstrates that there was a very particular set of core beliefs related to the city that remained intact through all periods and involved parties. It also establishes that these beliefs upheld the outlook that emphasized the cosmic importance of the city and its essential place and role in the function and operation of the universe. In light of the cultural, political, and ideological importance of Mesopotamia and its strong and enduring influence on the ANE world, it should be expected that the neighboring as well as some relatively more distant nations either adopted or became engaged in conversation with Mesopotamian cosmology. Thus, the coming chapters will focus on ideas regarding the gods, the temple, and kingship as they relate to the city in the writings of other ANE peoples.

Chapter 3: The City in Syrian and Anatolian Literature

Syria was the closest region to Mesopotamia and the major transit route to the Levant, while Anatolia was an important cultural hub with strong ties with Syria. As such, these regions were directly exposed to Mesopotamian influences and their disseminators. The purpose of this chapter is, therefore, to do a limited literary analysis of selected Syrian and Anatolian writings and assess the main ideas related to the city in cosmogony, cosmology, and, consequently, eschatology in these texts. The primary focus will be on the various theological and ideological particulars contained in the Eblaite writings, as well as the Hittite myths that illuminate the relationship between the city and the gods, kingship, the temple, and man. In the process, some preliminary observations regarding the presence and/or absence of the common Mesopotamian mythemes in the Syrian and Anatolian traditions and the local distinctions and developments will be noted. The intention of this chapter is to prepare the comparative points that would be contrasted with the biblical protology.

The City in Syria and Anatolia

Modern writers refer to Syria as a large region that encompasses the entire Northern Levant[1] and stretches to Mesopotamia to the east and Egypt to the south.[2] On the other hand, Anatolia is often referred to as Asia Minor.[3] Still, northern Syria and southeast Anatolia are

[1] This research will relate to the Northern Levant as Syria to maintain distinction from Canaan, a Levantine region that displays some important cultural and ethnic peculiarities that make it unique. On the boundary delimitation, see Karin Bartl, "The Northern Levant," in *A Companion to the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, ed. Daniel T. Potts (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 375–77. On the specifics of the area, see Peter M. M. G. Akkermans and Glenn M. Schwartz, *The Archaeology of Syria: From Complex Hunter-Gatherers to Early Urban Societies* (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 2.

[2] On the geography of Syria, see Matthew J. Suriano, "Historical Geography of the Ancient Levant," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Levant: C. 8000-332 BCE*, ed. Margreet L. Steiner and Ann E. Killebrew (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2018), 9–10.

[3] On the geography of Anatolia, see Aygül Süel, "The Anatolian-Syrian Relationship in the Light of the Ortaköy-Šapinuwa Tablets," in *Overturning Certainties in Near Eastern Archaeology: A Festschrift in Honor of K. Aslhan Yener*, ed. Çidem Maner, Mara T. Horowitz, and Allan S. Gilbert (Leiden, NL; Boston, MA: Brill, 2017), 634–35.

religiously, culturally, economically, and politically converging areas. During the later parts of MBA and during the LBA period, this area became known as Syro-Anatolia.[4] The urban developments in these areas were regionally specific and different from the processes in Mesopotamia.

The Origin of Cities in Syria

The causes of the urbanization of Syria and what elements were involved in the process[5] are still under debate.[6] According to the area surveys, a growing Semitic tribally organized population inhabited and densely settled large swaths of the Syrian steppe during the EB IV period. In a situation of a mixed economy with the dominance of pastoralism, the city could have been a permanent tribal center where sedentary and nomadic populations were successfully integrated. It also served as a regional center for hierarchically structured urban and semi-urban environment.[7] Thus, the landscape was dotted with many similarly organized chiefdoms.[8] The

[4] See Raphael Greenberg, *The Archaeology of the Bronze Age Levant: From Urban Origins to the Demise of City-States, 3700–1000 BCE* (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 2. On problems related to the archeological research of both areas, see Osborne, who is focused on IA; his geographical delineation of Syro-Anatolia is relevant for the MBE/LBE period too. See James F. Osborne, *The Syro-Anatolian City-States: An Iron Age Culture* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020), 16–19; and Akkermans and Schwartz, *Archaeology of Syria*, 1, 10–11.

[5] Syria shares the same characteristics with the rest of the Levant in terms of the appearance of the early permanent settlements (c. 10,000 BC), most notably during the PPNB period. However, there is a noticeable hiatus, as far as the material evidence is concerned, between those initial signs of intense human activity and the urbanization that started c. 3500 BC. Strong, although, limited, Mesopotamian influences traversed the region with Halaf (c. 6100–5100 BC) and later with Ubaid culture (6500–3800 BC). Even the Uruk expansion (5300–4300 BC) did not extend beyond central Mesopotamia and west of the Euphrates region. Bartl, *Northern Levant*, 378 and 390–95. Instead, Syria followed its unique tangent, and urbanization came there later in the EB II–III period. This process was independent of both Mesopotamia and Anatolia. See, Paolo Matthiae, "A Long Journey: Fifty Years of Research on the Bronze Age at Tell Mardikh/Ebla," in *Ebla and Its Landscape: Early State Formation in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Paolo Matthiae and Nicoló Marchetti (Walnut Creek, CA: Routledge, 2013), 35.

[6] Paolo Matthiae, *Ebla: Archaeology and History* (London, GB; New York, NY: Routledge, 2021), 27–29. Also, see Corrine Castel, "Urban Planning and Urbanization in 3rd Millennium BC Syria. Tell Al-Rawda in Context," in *Ebla and Beyond: Ancient Near Eastern Studies After Fifty Years of Discoveries at Tell Mardikh: Proceedings of the International Congress Held in Rome, 15th-17th December 2014*, ed. Marta D'Andrea, Paolo Matthiae, and Frances Pinnock (Wiesbaden, D: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2018), 78–79.

[7] Castel, *Urban Planning*, 80–83 and 84–88.

[8] Akkermans and Schwartz, *Archaeology of Syria*, 233–34.

most notable example of this development is ancient Ebla, a city strategically positioned in the plains of western Syria.

The City in Syria: The Case of Ebla

Ebla is a product of late protohistoric, original, and autonomous establishment and development. The identical processes were at work in the whole Syrian area, characterized by the absence of (a) the political and economic influence of the temple and (b) the cultural role of the city;[9] thus being very different from Mesopotamia.[10] Ebla's humble beginnings started as a small agricultural settlement;[11] in time, however, it developed into a mighty trading empire that greatly expanded.[12] Thus, Ebla was a typical city-state that overflowed its initial boundaries and established rule over a substantial area that included central, coastal, and southern Syria, as well as large parts of north-west Mesopotamia (the Khabur region).[13]

City, Writing, and Literature in Ebla

The discovery of the Ebla State Archive (ESA) in the administrative section of Royal Palace G has provided a great number of well-preserved documents arranged by subjects related to the political, economic, and religious life of Ebla.[14] Moreover, the evidence suggests the existence of an *edubba*, a scribal school, in the city.[15] ESA documents are written in archaic OS

[9] Paolo Matthiae, *Ebla: An Empire Rediscovered* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), 163.

[10] Liverani, *Ancient Near East*, 121–122.

[11] In the Mardikh I period (3500–3000 BC). Matthiae, *A Long Journey*, 37.

[12] During the Mardikh II era (3000–2000 BC). Ibid., 37–38.

[13] On Ebla history and economy, see Matthiae, *Ebla*, 169–181; Greenberg, *Bronze Age Levant*, 164; Cyrus H. Gordon, "Ebla as Background for the Old Testament," in *Congress Volume: Jerusalem 1986*, ed. John A. Emerton (Leiden, NL: Brill, 1988), 296; Akkermans and Schwartz, *Archaeology of Syria*, 239–40.

[14] Ibid., 238–39.

[15] Cyrus Gordon writes that "Ebla must be viewed as an intellectual center with a scribal academy in the network of the Cuneiform World." See *Ebla*, 294.

cuneiform.[16] The prevalent types of records are of administrative and economic nature; however, there are also lexical Sumerian and bilingual Sumerian-Eblaite tablets, as well as a significant number of monolingual documents written in the Eblaite language.[17] When literary writings are concerned, several hymns, proverbs, incantations, and myths are identified. Likewise, some documents of historical nature, such as letters, edicts, and treaties, are attested too.[18] Yet, the Ebla's *chora*[19] never yielded any significant document, so literacy was confined to the city.

Defining City within Its Syrian Context: The Case of Ebla

The origin of Ebla is unknown and subjected to speculation or educated guesses. However, there is some evidence that the ancient culture of Uruk came through the mediation of Kish and transformed the proto-Eblaite village into a growing urban center.[20] Also, it is assumed that Ebla had protective walls in the Mature and Late proto-Syrian phases of development (2900–2400 BC).[21] Its ground plan resembled that of the Mesopotamian cities and consisted of two parts, however, on different levels: the Upper City, or the Acropolis,[22] and the Lower City.[23] The residential area was divided into four quarters, which corresponded to the four gates that

[16] Its characteristics predate Sargon and the consequent Akkadian recension and improvement of form, grammar, and vocabulary. Matthiae, *Ebla*, 158–61.

[17] Ibid., 155.

[18] The Eblaite language reflects the grammar and vocabulary of a very archaic idiom that appears close to the eastern Semitic linguistic forms, yet it is independent from Akkadian and Amorite. In fact, it appears to be as old as or even older than Akkadian or Amorite. At the same time, Eblaite seems to be close to the Northwest Semitic idiomatic family. Thus, in some important aspects, it displays affinities with the Ugaritic and Canaanite dialects. Eblaite seems to have been spoken, from at least the Late Protohistoric Period, by a population that, based on the comparative study of the proper and city names, stretched throughout the Syro-Palestinian area. Ibid., 155–63.

[19] The term refers to "the core region sustaining the urban center, the nuclear area, and the economic hinterland, independently of any greater political aggregation." Paolo Matthiae and Nicolo Marchetti, "Representing the *Chora* of Ebla," in *Ebla and Its Landscape: Early State Formation in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Paolo Matthiae and Nicoló Marchetti (Walnut Creek, CA: Routledge, 2013), 26. On the possible influx of the Sumerian settlers, see Matthiae, *Ebla*, 215–20.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Some temples were clustered around the Acropolis. Ibid., 112.

[22] Ibid., 115.

[23] This was a densely populated residential area. Ibid., 65–67.

bore the names of the Syrian and, thus, Eblaite gods, such as Dagan, Hadda, Rasap, and Sipish.[24] These elements resemble the Mesopotamian city plan and, thus, suggest some cosmological ideas behind the physical design. However, the textual clues are nonexistent.

The City and Religion of Ebla

The available texts from ESA provide a valuable insight into the official worship of Ebla. So, the offering lists indicate the principal deities in the Eblaite pantheon.[25] Out of five hundred deities, Kura, Ishkhara, Adda, Nidabal, Rashap, Utu and several other gods are distinguished as the most important gods of the city.[26] It is believed that Kura was a celestial deity related to the cult of the king. The tablets often mention the "god of the city," but without stating his name.[27] Even so, Dagan, the regional chthonic deity related to vegetation, enjoyed the main place in the pantheon as "Lord of gods" and "Lord of the land"[28] and was understood as the local counterpart to the Mesopotamian Enlil.[29] Consequently, there were several temples or chapels in Ebla dedicated to "Dagan of Tuttul," or "Dagan of Irim" [30] and other urban centers. In Tuttul, however, Dagan was the main deity and, obviously, identified with that city.[31]

There are no extensive descriptions of the cult, yet a few short myths, incantations, and hymns found in the archive indicate the existence of two religious sentiments: popular and

[24] Matthiae, *Ebla*, 184.

[25] Ibid., 186–87.

[26] Very little is known about the Eblaite gods; however, some were identified with the Sumerian and Mesopotamian deities. Ibid., 187–89.

[27] Matthiae, *Ebla: Archaeology and History*, 71.

[28] Lorenzo Vigano, "Literary Sources for the History of Palestine and Syria: The EBLA Tablets," *BA* 47, no. 1 (March 1984): 11.

[29] Green wrote about the storm god in Syria, which was identified with Enlil, that "[u]nlike his Mesopotamian counterpart, this Syrian divinity had no parochial limitations, nor was he confined to a specific place or even identified consistently with any one city." See Alberto R. W. Green, *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 166.

[30] Matthiae, *Ebla*, 187–89.

[31] Matthiae, *Ebla: Archaeology and History*, 71.

elitist.[32] Significantly, the royal and popular gods of Ebla were tribal pre-urban deities who "had no related import on the cosmic or natural plane."[33] Alongside the local gods, the deities of some of the neighboring, as well as relatively distant, countries and lands were included in the pantheon.[34] However, the available texts do not elaborate on the relationship between the patron god and the city. Even so, the divine titles, such as "Lord of the land," place the city in a wider context of divine concerns. At any rate, the worship in Ebla was an urban affair.

The City and Temple in Ebla

The archive documents with annual expense reports on the gifts and offerings to the various gods clearly indicate the overall religious inclinations, at least on the state level.[35] The temples, customarily, contained the statues of divinities, and the administrative receipts detail clothing and jewelry dedicated to them, as well as daily food offerings.[36] However, the shrine was mere a house of a god, and there are no signs that it played any economic and/or political

[32] One, more popular, is built around exorcism and sympathetic magic. The other is reflected in the speculative thought contained in the mythemes, which more befits the priestly and scribal elite. Matthiae, *Ebla: Archaeology and History*, 189.

[33] Ibid., 71.

[34] This was the case of Sumerian Enki and Enlil and Hurrian Adamma and Ashtabi. Giovanni Pettinato, "Royal Archives of Tell Mardikh-Ebla," *BA* 39, no. 2 (May 1976): 49. Some of the rites familiar from the Mesopotamian milieu, such as the observance of holidays, the journeys of gods, sacrificial food offerings to gods, and dressing up deities, were practiced, yet largely following the local patterns and customs. Arguably, the presence of some Sumerian liturgical material points to the possible adherents of the related beliefs. As the ESA records demonstrate, religious pluralism or even some modest degree of syncretism was indeed present; however, the evidence of belief systems and cultic practices mutually influencing each other is at best sketchy. See Matthiae, *Ebla: Archaeology and History*, 66. Yet, any high cosmology that possibly circulated at that time was a minority view and not consequential. Matthiae suggests that it "is very likely that at Ebla as in the land of Sumer, it was believed that every urban centre was raised after the foundation of the main sanctuary by the polyadic god. Therefore, it is likewise plausible that it was held that the Temple of the Rock had been erected by the very same god Kura as his own residence or as a gateway to his mythical seat in the oceans." Ibid., 77. However, in the absence of a mythological narrative that would corroborate this assumption, everything remains in the realm of speculation.

[35] Alfonso Archi, "Studies in the Pantheon of Ebla," *Orientalia* 63, no. 3 (1994): 249–56.

[36] See Lorenzo Vigano, "Rituals at Ebla," *JNE S* 54, no. 3 (July 1995): 215–222. Likewise, Walther Sallaberger, "Kura, Youthful Ruler and Martial City-God of Ebla," in *Ebla and Beyond: Ancient Near Eastern Studies After Fifty Years of Discoveries at Tell Mardikh: Proceedings of the International Congress Held in Rome, 15th-17th December 2014*, ed. Marta D'Andrea, Paolo Matthiae, and Frances Pinnock (Wiesbaden, D: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2018), 121–24.

role, as was the case in Mesopotamia.[37] Likewise, the liturgical and other writings do not offer any hint regarding the relationship between the temple and the city.

Kingship in Ebla

Little is known about the system of rule and the rulers of Ebla. One of the early hypotheses was that some of the high-ranking city officials became kings. Thus, it seemed that the rulers were chosen from among the city aristocracy[38] and only in time did the rule become hereditary. However, this view is not supported anymore[39] and the real nature of the Ebla kingship and the related issues remain elusive.[40]

On the other hand, it seems that the effective rule was not exercised solely by the king but also by the close collegium of dignitaries.[41] Yet, in the general scheme of power, the royal palace was the highest authority, supported by an enormous army of hierarchically and territorially organized bureaucrats.[42] When it comes to the cult, the king supported the temple and stood before Kura, and through his agency the gods provided sustenance to the city.

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[37] Instead, it was the palace that provided the sustenance for gods on a daily basis, which was then distributed among the temple officials and a large number of the regular citizens. Sallaberger, *Kura*, 123–124. The Archive also makes clear that trade and economy were firmly in the hands of the Eblaite ruling family and the city's oligarchy, which administered redistribution of returns. Alfonso Archi, "Gifts at Ebla," in *Ebla and Its Archives: Text, History, and Society* (Berlin, D; Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2015), 165–168. It is indicative that the size of the temple buildings paled in comparison with the royal and other auxiliary governmental architectural complexes. Also, they lacked economic infrastructure. See Liverani, *Ancient Near East*, 127; Akkermans and Schwartz, *Archaeology of Syria*, 269.

[38] Matthiae, *Ebla*, 163–69 and 183.

[39] Robert R. Stieglitz, "The Deified Kings of Ebla," in *Eblaitica: Essays on the Ebla Archives and Eblaite Language, Volume 4*, ed. Cyrus Gordon and Gary Rendsburg (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 217–18.

[40] The Eblaite Sumerian texts use *en*, "lord," to designate a ruler, and the Eblaite title is *malikum*, a typical Semitic word for "king." See Stieglitz for a detailed discussion on the royal and governing titles. Ibid., 215–16. The confusion is even greater when it comes to the Sumerian word *lugal*, which in texts refers to the dignitaries highly positioned at the royal court and the governors of the cities under direct control. Matthiae, *Ebla*, 182.

[41] Samuel E. Finer, *The History of Government from the Earliest Times*, vol. I: Ancient Monarchies and Empires (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1999), 172–73. This group probably corresponded to the familiar archaic institution of the "abbu", the "fathers" or "judges," as it can be deduced from the name of one of the palaces in the Acropolis, the "Palace of the Council." See Matthiae, *Ebla*, 183–85.

[42] See Liverani, *Ancient Near East*, 122.

Deification of the King

The *Ebla King List* presents an impressive lineage of the deceased kings who once ruled.[43] There are also the offering list and cultic documents that indicate the practice of deification of the dead rulers. The kings were identified with the royal protector, Kura, and with the deceased and deified dynastic predecessors.[44] This custom resonates well with the familiar ED practices in Sumer and possibly predates them. Likewise, the writings from Ugarit attest that this practice was present and persisted among the Semites even at later times.[45] However, the general lack of mythological material and the nonexistence of the royal hymns do not allow assessing (a) the exact role and meaning of the deification of the kings and (b) the relationship between the city and kingship within the Eblaite belief system.

The City in Eblaite Literature

The Eblaite primary sources are the administrative texts, which detail beliefs and practices through a bureaucratic prism; however, they are relevant to the local cult only.[46] The literature with various genres *per se* is limited and properly refers to the Mesopotamian imported texts, i.e., some mythical narratives, hymns, and incantations to Ea/Enki. The only native text with an internal and coherent exposition of Eblaite theology is a liturgical piece, whose translation and interpretation still cause contention.

Myth

The paucity and terseness of the Eblaite writings limit what can be deduced. Thus, a

[43] Stieglitz, *Deified Kings of Ebla*, 219–20.

[44] Matthiae, *Ebla: Archaeology and History*, 67–68.

[45] Stieglitz, *Deified Kings of Ebla*, 217.

[46] Alfonso Archi, "The God Ḥay(y)a (Ea/Enki) at Ebla," in *Ebla and Its Archives: Text, History, and Society* (Berlin, D; Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2015), 656–57.

record of a treaty contains a laconic reference to the assembly of gods.[47] Or, there are records of activities related to the journeys of the local gods through the Ebla's *chora*[48] and word the "provision" is used for the sacrificial offerings.[49] These hints point to a possibly very developed and rich, though orally communicated, mythological substrate, which could be either local or Mesopotamian. But as to its nature, content, and primary ideas, we can only hypothesize.

Hymn

TM.75.G.1682 (Lord of Heaven and Earth/A Hymn to Divine Patron of Ebla)

The hymn designated without any adornment as TM.75.G.1682 appears in three different documents found on the exercise tablets[50] and in different contexts, and apparently directed to an anonymous deity. However, the basic text of the composition is almost identical and contains two parts in an address to, presumably, the patron god of Ebla. The first part[51] is evidently an abbreviated cosmological prelude, since it talks about the time before creation. Such an introduction resonates well with Sumerian counterparts in structure and in complete lack of theomachy, which is generally considered a Semitic creative mythopoeic contribution. However, there is a theological void related to the larger context, which is Mesopotamia, filled in by the other micro-narratives related to theogony, cosmogony, and anthropogony.

The hymnic part, which follows immediately after, offers a litany consisting of a string

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[47] "In the name of the Sun-god, of Haddad, and of the assembly of gods." Vigano, *Literary Sources*, 8–9.

[48] Alfonso Archi, "The Cultic Journey of the God Hadabal," in *Ebla and Its Archives: Text, History, and Society* (Berlin, D; Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2015), passim.

[49] Shawna Dolansky, "Syria-Canaan," in *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Mediterranean Religions*, ed. Barbette Stanley Spaeth (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 63.

[50] Giovanni Pettinato, "Ebla and the Bible," *BA* 43, no. 4 (Autumn 1980): 209–210.

[51] "You are the creator of the heavens and earth. There was no earth until you created it; There was no light until you created it. There was no sun until you created it." The reconstruction of the whole poem is provided as published in Victor H. Matthews and Don C. Benjamin, *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East*, 3rd ed. (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2007), 259–260. However, consult Giovanni Pettinato, *Archives of Ebla: An Empire Inscribed in Clay* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), 244.

listing an assemblage of divine attributes that stylistically have no equivalent in Sumerian literature.[52] These characterizations are expressed very directly and in the second-person singular. Interestingly, they ascribe everything that pertains to rule, provision, and protection to this individual god.[53] The hymn in its present form is focused on the single deity and does not bring the city and the temple into that god's orbit of interest and activity.[54]

Still, Archi offers an alternative translation of the first four stanzas, with a very intriguing result. The last line says that "lord(ship) was not in existence, abundance was not in existence, cityship was not in existence".[55] This rendering undoubtedly evokes a wider array of familiar concepts so reminiscent of Sumerian cosmological sentiments and imagery. Kingship immediately captures attention; moreover, the abundance is a direct consequence of the juxtaposition of the management exercised by the king within the environs of the city. If this version of the Eblaite-Sumerian text is accepted, it would indicate that the north-west Syrian Semites very early in history adopted some Sumerian cosmological concepts. However, Archi's translation is fiercely and rightly disputed by Pettinato[56] and, therefore, remains controversial.

The City in Eblaite Eschatology

The available evidence related to the burial customs in Ebla follows the common Syrian typology of the veneration of the ancestors.[57] Even so, some ESA incantations referred to Enki as

[52] Pettinato, *Ebla and the Bible*, 212.

[53] "You alone rule over creation. You alone feed us. You alone protect us… You alone never sleep. You alone never die. You alone deliver us from our enemies. You alone give us peace."

[54] Pettinato's mature version of the hymn is quite literal and very similar to his early rendering made by the collation of the sources: "Lord of heaven and earth, You hadn't made Earth exist: you created it, You hadn't made the sunlight exist: you created it, You did not make (more) chaos!" Translation is mine based on the Italian rendering of the hymn in Giovanni Pettinato, ed., *Mitologia sumerica* (Torino: Utet, 2013), chap. 1, Kindle.

[55] Alfonso Archi, "The Epigraphic Evidence from Ebla and the Old Testament," *Biblica* 60, no. 4 (1979): 562.

[56] Pettinato, *Ebla and the Bible*, 209–13.

[57] Maria G. Biga, "Buried Among the Living at Ebla?: Funerary Practices and Rites in a XXIV Cent. B.C.

"the LUGAL ABZU, 'the king of the Netherworld.'"[58] This could indicate a measure of familiarity, perhaps even some affinity, with certain Sumerian and Akkadian views among the scribal elite. However, without more textual evidence, it is very difficult to truly understand the views on death and the afterlife in Ebla and Syria during the MB age.

The Origin of the City in Anatolia

Urban developments in Anatolia started a lot later than the processes already happening in the Middle East.[59] This situation seems to be the result of the interplay of various factors that hampered the development of large urban centers.[60] Instead, small, well-fortified cities, some of which were the cultic hubs, filled the landscape.[61] This situation was pervasive throughout the MBA and even LBA periods.[62]

The City in Anatolia: The Case of Hattusha

Hittites are believed to be the latecomers in the area of the Anatolian Plain where they appear during the MBA period.[63] Their expansion started sometime around 1750 BC, which

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Syrian Kingdom," in *Sepolti tra i vivi: Buried among the living. Evidenza e interpretazione di contesti funerari inabitato, Atti del convegno internazionale, Rome 26–29 aprile 2006*, ed. Gilda Bartoloni and M. Gilda Benedettini, vol. 1, Scienze dell'antichità. Storia archeologia antropologia 14 (Roma, I: Edizioni Quasar, 2007), 249–75, passim.

[58] Vigano, *Literary Sources*, 11.

[59] See Klaus Schmidt, "Anatolia," in *A Companion to the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, ed. Daniel T. Potts (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 149; Hammond, *City in the Ancient World*, 98–99; Christoph Bachhuber, "The Anatolian Plateau," in *A Companion to the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, ed. Daniel T. Potts (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 576–77; Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati, "Andirons at Urkesh: New Evidence for the Hurrian Identity of the Early Trans-Caucasian Culture," in *View from the Highlands: Rchaeological Studies in Honour of Charles Burney*, ed. Antonio G. Sagona (Leuven, B; Dudley, MA: Peeters Publishers, 2004), 68; Massimo Maiocchi, "A Hurrian Administrative Tablet from Third Millennium Urkesh," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 101, no. 2 (2011): 191–203; Mirjo Salvini, "La Civiltà Dei Hurriti, Popolo Dell'asia Anteriore Antica. Introduzione Alla Storia Degli Studi E Alla Documentazione Testuale," *La civiltà dei Hurriti: La Parola del Passato*, no. 55 (2000): 7–24.

[60] Liverani, *Ancient Near East*, 261–62.

[61] Ingolf Thuesen, "The Neo-Hittite City-State," in *A Comparative Study of Six City-State Cultures*, ed. Mogens H. Hansen (Copenhagen, DK: Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters, 2002), 43.

[62] On the peoples and history of this area, see Trevor Bryce, *Warriors of Anatolia: A Concise History of the Hittites* (London, UK; New York, NY: I.B.Tauris, 2018), 22, 24; Hammond, *City in the Ancient World*, 101;

[63] However, see Trevor Bryce's discussion of the problem in *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (Oxford, UK;

signaled the beginning of their dominance over the mixed populace of AP and large areas of northern Syria that lasted for more than half a millennia. Their quest is linked to the city of Hattuhsa[64] which became the first and longest-lasting political, economic, religious, and cultural center of the Hittites. However, the Hittite kingdom was a territorial one, and the capitals were essentially the residence cities of the rulers.[65]

City, Writing, and Literature in Hattusha

As a multilingual society, the Hittites[66] used several languages in their everyday communication or, at least, in their writings,[67] as well as two different writing systems[68] utilized for different purposes.[69] Thus, the Akkadian cuneiform was used during the OHK to record the collection of the cultic texts with materials that can be categorized as festival instructions. These liturgical documents contain some etiological tales, hymns, and myths embedded in the body of the text, such as *The Illuyanka Myth*.[70]

The New Kingdom (or Empire) was marked by a general proliferation of texts related to

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New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006), 113–15.

[64] Labarna I moved his residence from Nesa (Kanesh) to the ruins of the old Assyrian trade post Hattus. There, he built a new city and changed its name to Hattusa. To immortalize this deed, Labarna changed his own name to Hattusili, "man from Hattusa." Bryce, *Warriors of Anatolia*, 26.

[65] The difference between capital and residence city consists in the prevalence of administration and economy based in the royal court in the latter. Novak, *Phenomenon of Residential Cities*, 313–14.

[66] The Hittite language belonged to the Anatolian Indo-European branch of languages, which finally went extinct by the beginning of the AD era or shortly after. Theo van den Hout, *A History of Hittite Literacy: Writing and Reading in Late Bronze-Age Anatolia* (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 8.

[67] The following languages are attested in various writings: Hittite, Hattic, Luwian, Palaic, Hurrian, and Akkadian. However, according to Hammond, the Hittite archives contain documents written in eight languages. Hammond, *City in the Ancient World*, 101–2.

[68] They were (a) hieroglyphic Luwian, developed locally, and (b) cuneiform, imported at the time of the beginning of the Old Hittite kingdom (c. 1650 BC). Van den Hout, *History of Hittite Literacy*, 3–4.

[69] Luwian played an important role in symbolizing the status and power of the royals, yet there are some indications that at times it was also used for mundane records. Thuesen, *Neo-Hittite City-State*, 43. The Akkadian cuneiform was used for communication among the elite, politics, and diplomatic correspondence. Van den Hout, *History of Hittite Literacy*, 181 and 102.

[70] Ibid., 94–96.

historiography, diplomacy, law, ritual, hymns, prayers, administration, and even instructions.[71] During this period, short inserts of the native myths were incorporated in these texts; this alludes to the existence of the longer tales or, possibly, writings. These passages offer insights into the cosmological ideas of the Hitties and their predecessors. In addition, many foreign writings are imported and either translated or adapted. However, Mesopotamian texts representing a "broad international cultural influences... do not appear to reflect any wholly independent 'Akkadian tradition.'"[72] Apart from the Mesopotamian compositions and prayers, one of the most important literary additions is the Hurrian *Kumarbi Cycle*, which was conformed to the Hittite situation and provides a complex cosmological outlook.

Defining City within Its Anatolian Context: The Case of Hattusha

The word for city in Hittite is ***happiriya***, which means "a place of trade," and it includes the inhabitants, their activities, and facilities behind its walls. The city stands in sharp contrast to *gimra*, which refers to arable land, pastures, and the dangerous wilderness outside the city walls.[73] Considering that Kanesh, the first capital of the Hittite kingdom, was the Assyrian trade center, the word ***happiriya*** expresses the understanding of what city essentially conceptualized: a place of security, safety, and commerce.

Like most cities in Mesopotamia and Syria, MBA Hattusha was walled and divided into two parts, the Upper City and the Lower City. They had strictly separate roles, the residential and the administrative/cultic, and were connected in a highly symbolic, cosmological way.[74] Some

[71] Van den Hout, *History of Hittite Literacy*, 142–69.

[72] Wyatt made this reflection when writing on Ugaritic literature; however, his observation is more than appropriate in the present context. See Nicolas Wyatt, "The Religion of Ugarit: An Overview," in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies,* ed. Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt (Boston, MA: Brill Academic Pub, 1999), 530.

[73] Bachhuber, *Anatolian Plateau*, 577 and 583.

[74] Bryce conveys the idea that "the layout of the whole city as symbolizing the cosmic world-form of the Hittites—with the palace as the earthly world, the temple city as the godly world, and the cult district lying in

important regional cities that were also major religious centers likely followed the same layout.

Hattusha was an important religious center, and it contained the temple quarters with thirty temples that housed both the local and foreign deities, as well as the gods of the conquered cities.[75] Despite this saturation with sacred, it was not the sole cultic point. In good part, that role was distributed among several towns, such as Nerik, Arinna, and Zippalanda and other less important localities that were, otherwise, trivial apart from their religious significance.[76] In reality, the temples of Hattusha and the state-sponsored worship of their gods were part of a larger political program intended to keep the country united. So, the royal court was the center of gravity around which everything revolved, and it was the whim of the king's will that could change Hattusha's position, as it indeed happened several times.[77]

The City in Hittite Cosmology

The realm of gods in Hittite thought is, in a limited sense, analogous with human society; the Storm-god (Teshub) is the king who, with the help of his wife and their family, rules over the divine world and the land of Hatti. Similarly to the Mesopotamian traditions, the other gods also formed families that ruled over their towns and cities. The gods also met in the assembly to discuss and decide political and legal issues or to be witnesses to human treaties.[78]

Hittite anthropogeny is quite laconic without any etiological speculations; simply, men are created by Mother Goddess out of clay. Unlike the clear-cut statements in a prologue of a

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between as providing the passage from the transient to the eternal." See Trevor Bryce, *Life and Society in the Hittite World* (Oxford, UK; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002), 235.

[75] Bachhuber, *Anatolian Plateau*, 591 and 594.

[76] Ian Rutherford, *Hittite Texts and Greek Religion: Contact, Interaction, and Comparison* (Oxford, UK; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020), 29–31.

[77] See Bryce, *Hittite World*, 232–233.

[78] Gary M. Beckman, "Under the Spell of Babylon: Mesopotamian Influence on the Religion of the Hittites," in *Cultures in Contact: From Mesopotamia to the Mediterranean in the Second Millennium B.C.*, ed. Joan Aruz, Sarah Graff, and Yelena Rakic (New York, NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013), 288.

larger mythological drama so familiar from Mesopotamian literature, it takes gleaning through much of religious literature to realize that human purpose was to serve gods, as the late prayer of Murushili II indicates.[79]

The kings were divinely appointed intermediaries between gods and men whose duty was to maintain the fragile balance of the scale on which human servitude (duty and obligation toward gods) and divine lordship (expectations from and responses to man) were hanging. However, king's duty was not the protection, maintenance, and prosperity of the city as the divine abode; instead, his duty was to the land. [80] After all, the land of Hatti was a teritorial kingdom. Thus, city is present in the cosmolgy of the Hittites, but often it does not seem more than a decorum, a mere injection of a foreign tradition that floats in the conceptual world and proves difficult to relate to the reality of the Hittite world.[81]

The City and Hittite Religion

The religion of the Hittites was extreme pantheism during the Kingdom and a syncretic assortment during the Empire period.[82] The foundational deities, such as the "Storm-god" Tarhunna, the "Sun-goddess" of Arinna, and the "disappearing god" Telepinu, were the native Hatti gods.[83] The journey through the Hittite cultic manuals and a few self-standing myths

[79] "The plowmen who used to work the fallow fields of the gods have died, so they do not work or reap the fields of the gods. The grinding women who used to make the offering bread for the gods have died, so they do not [make] the god's offering bread any longer" (CTH 376.A). Itamar Singer, *Hittite Prayers* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 52.

[80] One of the self-legitimization statements spoken by a king contains a very curious line. "The gods, the Sun-goddess and the Storm-god, have entrusted to me, the King, my land and my household, so that I, the King, should protect my land and my household on my own behalf" (CTH 414). Beckman, *Under the Spell of Babylon*, 289.

[81] Syrian and Mesopotamian influences on Hittite cosmology are fairly late, and despite the intellectual adoption, a sort of distant attitude toward these ideas is detectable.

[82] It consisted of three primary, yet different streams: the old Hatti, the Luwian/Palaic (Indo-European), and the Hurrian. Bryce, *Hittite World*, 135–38.

[83] The Indo-European influences are very faint; yet, some of the attributes given to the male consort of the Mother Goddess, the mountaintop god of thunder, correspond to a kind of Hittite Zeus. James G. MacQueen, *The*

demonstrates that gods live in cities—primordial, heavenly, as well as the earthly ones—in the lands of Hatti, Hurrians, and Akkadians.

The state religion was focused on the royal couple, who held more than the ruling position. Thus, the king was the high priest who officiated at the festivals and ceremonies. The queen was the high priestess and performed various rituals with the king or on her own. Likewise, the whole royal family was involved in some ritual and ceremonial roles. In general, the state was involved in the religious life of the country and, to a large degree, controlled it.[84]

The City and the Temple

As in the rest of the ANE world, Hittite gods were to a certain extent personified powers of nature, yet they were imagined as "human beings on a grand scale," possessing and displaying the same array of positive and negative emotions and character traits.[85] The temples were residences of the deities who lived in them, albeit intermittently, and depended on their servants to attend to their needs.[86] Nevertheless, the dependency was mutual since the worshipers expected divine favor in response to rituals and sacrificial offerings.

The temples were not exclusive worship places or necessary for all festival activities and the numerous rites that accompanied them. Since in the Hittite polytheism "every rock, mountain, tree, spring, and river had its resident god or spirit... [which] were not mere

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Hittites and Their Contemporaries in Asia Minor, rev. ed. (New York, NY: Thames & Hudson, 1986), 109–10. On the other hand, the Hurrianization of Hittite religion started with the advance of the Empire. There were two major periods in Hittite religion, the Kingdom and the Empire phases; see Piotr Taracha, *Religions of Second Millennium Anatolia* (Wiesbaden, D: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009), 7–8. This process can be seen in the renaming of the principal deities, whereby they became Teshub and Hebat; likewise, their immediate family was extended by adding to it Kumarbi, Sausga, Nikkal, and other Hurrian deities. MacQueen, *Hittites*, 109–10. However, there were also some Syrian and Mesopotamian influences, as some dedicated temples and the literature can attest. Rutherford, *Hittite Texts*, 27–28. Several of the Babylonian gods were often referred to at the end of the treaties, however, under designation of "Former Gods" or "Primeval Gods" as deposed to the Netherworld.

[84] Rutherford, *Hittite Texts*, 34–35.

[85] Bryce, *Hittite World*, 139.

[86] The statues were washed, anointed, dressed, and fed on a daily basis.

abstractions, but vital living entities... regarded as conscious living forces,"[87] the elements in nature, such as mountaintops, water springs, and groves, served as shrines and cultic spots.[88]

The temple, as an institution, by and large was not involved in or participated in the economy of the Kingdom. This situation changed dramatically during the Empire but its role and input were limited to the religious sphere of life, and temples remained instrumental to the imperial aims.[89] Even though some of the cultic centers and towns have approached the status of temple cities[90] and some temples have become self-sufficient and powerful establishments, the involvement of the king in religion assured that they never operated independently.[91]

Hittite cities and towns had their own patron gods; however, the nature of that relationship is not quite clear. In the case of Hattusha, the transfer of the royal residence to another city meant the relocation of all the gods too, by moving their statues to the new place. So, a city was mere a host of a deity and his or her temple was essentially a temporary home.[92]

The Hittite Kingship

One family or clan ruled the Hittite Kingdom and Empire from the beginning to the end of the Hittite dominance.[93] The King was closely involved in all aspects of governing, with the help of many administrators and military officers. Thus, the king[94] was directly in charge of the

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[87] Bryce, *Hittite World*, 135.

[88] Rutherford, *Hittite Texts*, 30–31.

[89] "Nevertheless, temples were never wholly independent institutions in Hittite society (i.e., clearly distinguished from royal/palatial institutions; see Bryce 2002: 153). The relatively diminished power of the temple is a characteristic of urbanism during both the MBA and LBA on the AP." Bachhuber, *Anatolian Plateau*, 578.

[90] Rutherford, *Hittite Texts*, 35–36.

[91] Bryce, *Hittite World*, 153.

[92] The theology of the imbuement of the statue of a god with the divine presence, which is localized in it and not in the temple per se, seems to concur with this conclusion.

[93] Gary M. Beckman, "From Hattuša to Charchemish: The Latest on the Hittite History," in *Current Issues and the Study of the Ancient Near East*, ed. Mark W. Chavalas (Claremont, CA: Regina Books, 2007), 110.

[94] Bryce, *Hittite World*, 16–18.

collection and redistribution of staples, and he also controlled all other aspects of the economy. Though the assembly of dignitaries existed during the Kingdom period, it was subjected to the king, and its role in decision-making and authority were limited.[95]

In the grand scheme of responsibility, the king was divinely appointed mediator between the gods and humans and, therefore, accountable to the Storm-god to whom all the earth and riches thereon belonged. However, gods do not seem to be involved in choosing individual rulers.[96] In fact, the succession was hereditary, mostly from the father to the son.

Deification of the King

The king was not considered a god; however, the kingship was regarded as a divine office. At best, a king was elevated to a higher level during the coronation ceremony, when he was dressed as the high priest and symbolically presented as "shepherd of people," which was a prerogative of the Sun-god; moreover, he was even considered "the god in making."[97] Thus, the king was the unquestioned lord and master of the city and the land.

The City in Hittite Literature

Hittite literature, especially from its NHK (Empire) period, is ample in genres and quite voluminous. However, it serves very unique cultural and religious needs that are primarily local,

[95] "In the Hittite Old Kingdom around 1650 BCE there was an assembly... but always under the king's control. The assembly continued to exist into the Empire period (1400–1200 BCE), but its role was apparently circumscribed. The term for assembly was *panku*, related to the English prefix pan-, and sometimes meaning ''all,'' implying broad representation. But not all citizens sat in it, only some very high officials." Martin III and Snell, *Democracy and Freedom*, 399.

[96] Trevor Bryce, "Anatolian States," in *The Oxford Handbook of the State in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean*, ed. Peter Fibiger Bang and Walter Scheidel, reprint ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), 164.

[97] Bryce, *Hittite World*, 19–21. Although the king was not deified or expressly identified with any deity during his life, after his death he was declared "to become a god, a clear indication of his *post mortem* promotion to the ranks of those he formerly served." Ibid., 21. However, it seems that "becoming god" was not more than joining the ancestors on the green meadows of the Netherworld. Billy J. Collins, *The Hittites and Their World* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 193–94. Therefore, deification is clearly of geneonymic character, and there are no indications that it is ideologically fashioned in opposition to the temple, as was the case in Mesopotamia.

endemic, and markedly rural in orientation.[98] Hence, the Kumarbi Cycle is of particular interest.

Myth

There are several surviving Hittite myths.[99] These myths are distilled from the ritual texts, and by their nature, they are distinctively rural and agrarian. Thus they reflect, according to some scholars, an archaic pre-Hittite religious landscape in which natural elements, such as mountains, trees, and rivers and their divine representatives are pervasive and, consequently, dominate cult and ritual.[100]

The Old Anatolian myths are of particular interest, for they reflect the earliest native layers of tradition. The most substantial of these myths are *The Illyuanka* and *The Telipinu* myths. As far as the foreign or foreign-inspired myths are concerned, some of the Songs from the Kumarbi Cycle, such as *The Song of Going Forth* and *The Song of Ullikummi* draw attention.

The Illuyanka Myth[101]

The myth is placed within the context of the instructions for the *purulli* festival performed as an annual fertility rite at the spring equinox to make land prosper and thrive. The

[98] Whatever influences came from the fully urbanized Mesopotamia were of limited character, historically mostly late, temporary, and very likely affected only the scribal elite. Liverani, *Ancient Near East*, 322. The same can be said of the Hurrian impact, which was much more prominent and, itself, to a considerable extent echoed some of the Sumero-Akkadian mythemes that emphasized the essential cosmological role of the city.

[99] Based on the sources and general character, Hoffner divides them into four distinctive groups: Old Anatolian myths, Hurrian myths, tales of gods and men, and a Canaanite myth. See Harry A. Hoffner, *Hittite Myths*, sec. ed. (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1991), passim. Güterbock has a slightly different approach and explicates that the Old Anatolian myths are written in Hattic, Palaic, and Luwian, but also in Hittite, when they deal with the local deities, places, and themes. Hans G. Güterbock, "Hittite Mythology," in *Mythologies of the Ancient World*, ed. Samuel Noah Kramer (New York, NY: Anchor Books, 1961), 143.

[100] Bachhuber, *Anatolian Plateau*, 577–578. The myths written as single-standing literary compositions are the myths of foreign origin, for which Güterbock prefers epics as a designation. Güterbock, *Hittite Mythology*, 143. These myths come from Hurrian, Mesopotamian, and Canaanite sources or extensively incorporate various elements from these traditions. See Mary R Bachvarova, "From 'Kingship in Heaven' to King Lists: Syro-Anatolian Courts and the History of the World," *JANER* 12 (2012): passim. Reflecting on this dichotomy of roots Collins writes that the "Hittites have left behind little evidence of an indigenous cosmogony or cosmology. Any ideas of a demiurge or a creation seem to be borrowings, either from Mesopotamia or from the Hurrians. A handful of allusions to cosmological ideas can be found in texts of various genres." See Collins, *Hittites*, 191.

[101] On the characteristics of *The Illuyanka Myth*, see Van den Hout, *History of Hittite Literacy*, 96.

rite is a reenactment of the primordial struggle between chaos and order, which are represented by the Storm/Weather-god and a dragon named Illuyanka.[102] The opening scenes are confined entirely to the various cities and mostly include divine actors[103] who behave in a typically human manner[104] as they accompany the Storm-god in his pursuit of the dragon and victory.[105] A distinct human assistant to the gods appears in the myth, too; however, his excessive closeness to the deities ends tragically.[106] Therefore, the myth underlines the necessity of order and its priority in the struggle with chaos and warns against taking and/or maintaining an inappropriate individual position. In its present form, the story is set within an essentially urban context, yet the city is not much more than a part of the background scenery. Still, this is very unusual because the land of Hatti was primarily rural and agrarian. While this could be due to Assyrian or Syrian scribal influences, the insistence on order within an urban environment may be literary and cultic propaganda of the royal and imperial attempts to urbanize the domain.

The Disappearance of Telipinu (Telipinu Myth)[107]

Just as *The Illuyanka Myth*, *Telipinu Myth* is of Hatti origin and belongs to the Old Anatolian and ritual myths. It consists of two parts: (a) the myth (the disappearance of the god)

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[102] Van den Hout, *History of Hittite Literacy*, 95.

[103] This reflects the general ANE belief that cities were the homes and domains of the gods. The amplified echo of the same idea can also be found in *The Story of Appu*, written down in Old Hittite script in the 13th century BC, which makes a clear statement along identical lines: "The Sungod lives in Sippar, the Moongod lives in Kuzina, the Stormgod lives in Kummiya, Ishtar lives in Niniveh, Nanaya lives in Kissina, while Babylon is the home of Marduk." Ibid., 115.

[104] This corresponds well with the common ANE theanthropism.

[105] Unlike the Mesopotamian myths, which include the assembly of gods as passive conferrers of divine attributes to the chief deity, Hittite gods accompany the Storm-god in his pursuit of the dragon. Nevertheless, the primary motifs of the myth resonate well with familiar ideas present in the Sumerian divine battles and Akkadian theomachies.

[106] This element is in accordance with the Hittite view, whereby "the activity of everyone contributes to the proper functioning of the cosmos, but each individual must remain in his or her proper place." Gary M. Beckman, "The Anatolian Myth of Illuyanka," *JANES*, no. 14 (January 1, 1982): 25.

[107] The "vanishing god" type of myth is uniquely Hittite. On the vanishing or disappearing deity, see Güterbock, *Hittite Mythology*, 144.

and (b) the ritual (reconciliation). Telipinu vanishes, thus leaving his place and duties, which has grave consequences for the divine world and nature. The ensuing search is eventually successful, and the rite of reconciliation commences.

The city is barely mentioned in the myth; nevertheless, it is a place of rites, sacrifices, and the assembly of gods.[108] Even some installations that describe a borderline urban node are listed in the text.[109]

In the end, the hero of the myth does not remain in the fields and the forests where he had initially retreated; instead, he "came back home to his house and took account of his land."[110] So, Telipinu is imagined as a divine lord of an estate who resides in the city.[111] In other words, the city is simply a place of divine residence and assembly, as well as a fitting place where rituals are performed and sacrifices are offered to the gods.

The Song of Going Forth (Theogony)

Like the Akkadain myths, the Song[112] deals with the kingship in heaven theme and, thus, recounts the succession of divine kings Allalu, Anu, and Kumarbi and the birth of the Storm-god.

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[108] §7 (A i 32–33) "The Storm God began to search for Telipinu. In his city (the Storm God) [grasps] the city gate, but can't manage to open it." Hoffner, *Hittite Myths*, 15.

[109] §26 (A iv 8–13) "May Telipinu's anger, wrath, sin, and sullenness depart. May the house release it. May the middle... release it. May the window release it. May the hinge <release it.> May the middle courtyard release it. May the city gate release it. May the gate complex release it. May the King's Road release it." The assortment of elements fits better a fortified manor than a fully developed urban condition.

[110] §28 (A iv 20).

[111] Exactly the reality of the Anatolian Pre-literate Hatti and the Hettite "urban" and "literate" situation.

[112] The song is titled differently by different authors; thus, it is known as *The Song of Going Forth*, *Song of Kumarbi*, and the like. The myth is the opening song of the Kumarbi Cycle, which consists of five or more songs. The Cycle, and so the Song, is of Hurrian origin; however, it is built on a decidedly Mesopotamian mythologemic foundation. The long missing colophon was recently identified, thereby revealing the original title, also rendered as *Song of Genesis/Beginning*., which gives the *Song* theogonic and cosmogonic character. Carlo Corti, "The So-Called 'Theogony' or 'Kingship in Heaven': The Name of the Song," *SMEA* 49 (2007): 119–20. This Hurro-Hittite myth is dated to the 13th century BC; still, the core of the composition is much older and resonates to a certain extent with the OB *Theology of Dunnu*. On the Levantine and Mycenaean links and influences, see Erik van Dongen, "The 'Kingship in Heaven'-Theme of the Hesiodic Theogony: Origin, Function, Composition," *GRBS*, no. 51 (2011): 183–84.

However, the alteration is not linear from a father to a son but between two lines of the rulers.[113]

The proem informs us that the Song is about the Former or Primeval Gods[114] who are now mostly deposed to the Netherworld as the result of the ascension of the young gods. The invocation and call to divine attention continue in the second paragraph, which develops into the first scene that introduces the main characters within the primordial heavenly setting.[115] The third paragraph develops the plot further into theomachy.

As the story develops, Kumarbi produces three deities, of which one is the Storm-god Teshub but becomes sick and looks for help in Nippur.[116] Throughout the narrative, Kumarbi appears to be in the heavenly realm, populated with other Old deities. So, the events are unfolding on an already established divine plain, with no creative act attempted and without human presence. Quite in line with this, the time setting is repeatedly referred to as primordial while theogony continues. Assuredly, the primeval and pre-creational setting of Nippur is a Mesopotamian topos.

The war between Kumarbi and Teshub begins immediately after the Storm-god is born. As it is expected, the young god successfully deposed Kumarbi from the heavenly throne and, also, exiled the War-god to "the town of Banapi." The very end of the Song continues along the

[113] So, Alalu is deposed by Anu and Kumarbi, Alalu's son, attempts to prevent Anu from imposing his seed as a successor on the throne.

[114] §1 (A i 1–4) "...who are Primeval Gods, let the [. . .] , weighty gods listen: Nara, Napsara, Minki, (and) Ammunki! Let Ammezzadu listen! Let [. . . and . . .], the father and mother of [. . .] listen!" Hoffner, *Hittite Myths*, 42.

[115] "§2 (A i 5–11) Let [. . . and . . .] the father and mother of Ishara, listen! Ellil and NINLIL, who [below] and above (are) weighty, mighty deities, [. . .] and . . . , let them listen! Long ago, in primeval years Alalu was king in heaven. Alalu was sitting on the throne, and weighty Anu, the foremost of the gods, was standing before him. He was bowing down at his (Alalu's) feet, and was placing in his hand the drinking cups."

[116] §8 (A i 42–46) "Kumarbi, wai1ing(?), went to the city of Nippur. He sat down on a lordly [throne]. Kumarbi doesn't [. . .] . (Someone) counts [the months]. The seventh(?) month arrived, and inside of him the mighty [deities . . .]." Since Kumarbi is often identified with Elil (Enlil), his retreat to Mesopotamia and resting on the "lordly throne" there support this association.

theogonic lines, thereby additionally delineating the time backdrop of the story.[117]

The Hittite *Song of Going Forth*, obviously, takes the heavenly and divine origin of the city as granted. Yet, the city is mostly a part of the background scenery, while the temple is simply assumed, and despite the significant import of Mesopotamian concepts, quite void of much theological substance.

The Song of Ullikummi[118]

The principal actor in the Song is the Hurrian god Kumarbi, who is dethroned from the Heavenly Kingship by the Storm-god Teshub. Thus, as the ruler of the Netherworld, he is seething with desire for revenge and restoration to his former status and place. Kumarbi plots to regain the kingship by creating an adversary to Teshub, a stone-monster named Ullikummi.

Unfortunately, the beginning of the text is damaged, thus the cosmological time as a setting marker that gives the general context to the narration is missing. Yet, a laconic passing-by-manner reference to the creations is given close to the end of the Song where the commotion within the divine assembly is discussed. There, the creation, referred to as "cut heaven and earth apart," is something that had already happened in the distant past.[119] In line with this, in the body of the myth, the gods are described as dwelling in fortified cities and in houses without humans to attend to their needs, which clearly alludes to the primordial setting of the myth.

The plot begins in Urkish, Kumarbi's city in Hurrian-held northern Masopotamia, and

[117] §24 (A iv 17–27) "When the Earth cried out in labor pains, [. . .] she bore sons. A messenger went (to tell the king of the gods). And [the god . . . , the king], on his throne approved. [. . .] drove(?) the fine word."

[118] *The Song of Ullikummi* is just like *Kingship in Heaven* of Hurrian origin and a part of the Kumarbi Cycle. It was adopted by the Hittites after the Hurrians were conquered in the 14th century BC. The documents with the Hittite version of the myth were found in Hatusha's library. The composition does not follow any structure familiar from the Sumerian and Akkadian writings.

[119] "Ubelluri spoke to Ea, "When they built heaven and earth upon me, I was aware of nothing. And when they came and cut heaven and earth apart with a copper cutting tool, I was even unaware of that." (Tablet III, 61)" Hoffner, *Hittite Myth*s, 64.

later develops and enfolds in the towers and ramparts of Kummiya, "the dear town" of the Storm-god.[120] Kumarbi's intention is to kill Teshub and destroy his city, which proves to be as important as the removal of the rival. This is visible in the etymology of the city's name, which refers to the heavenly throne, and in the name of its intended destroyer, sent by Kumarbi—Ulli-kummi.[121] This essential connection between Teshub and Kummiya, divine and city,[122] resonates well with the core Mesopotamian theological premises.[123]

Although the story is not complete, *The Song of Ullikummi* abounds with elements that constitute a standard set of Mesopotamian mythemes, such as (a) the separation of heaven and earth, (b) the divine primordial/embryonic cities and dwellings, (c) the reciprocal relation of a god and city, (d) the identification of the divine domain with city (Apsu), (e) the involvement of the assembly of gods, (f) the heavenly kingship, (g) the Akkadian type of theogony, and (h) theomachy.[124] At the same time, the bulk of names and geography in the composition are distinctively Hurrian, giving it a definite local Syro-Anatolian flare. More importantly, there is no indication that the earthly city was conceived or understood within the same paradigm in terms of divine creation and ownership of the city and its relation to the kingship.[125]

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[120] See Hans G. Güterbock, "The Song of Ullikummi: Revised Text of the Hittite Version of a Hurrian Myth," *JCS* 5, no. 4 (1951): 147; and "The Song of Ullikummi: Revised Text of the Hittite Version of a Hurrian Myth (Continued)," *JCS* 6, no. 1 (1952): 21.

[121] Güterbock, *Hittite Mythology*, 166.

[122] Also, we learn that the city of Kummiya is in heaven, and a little bit later, that Apsuwa (Apsu), the Ea's abode in the underground ocean of sweet water, is a city. "Tašmišu to the Storm-God again began to speak: "O Storm-God, my lord! ...Come! Let us go to Apsuwa, before Ea!" Likewise, see the translation note in Güterbock, *Hittite Mythology*, 23.

[123] "When Tašmišu the Storm-God's words heard, he promptly rose... And to a high tower he went up."

[124] Also, several other divinities that come directly from the Sumero-Akkadian pantheon are mentioned in the *Song*. These components hint at a possible, albeit lost, Babylonian source that had found a way into Hurrian tradition and was later transmitted and adopted by the Hittites. Considering that Hurrians were not exactly an urban society, the peculiar emphasis on city in the Song corroborates this proposition, because Hurrian social organization was feudal and they had but a few cities.

[125] Since the copies of the Hittite version of the myth are positively dated to the 13th century BC, we can

The City in Hittite Eschatology

There are two or, perhaps, three distinguishable Hittite views on hereafter[126] and they contradict each other. The royal funeral rituals reflect the belief that the kings and queens, after death, go on to some kind of enjoyable next existence by becoming gods and joining the ancestors on the holy mountain, where lush green meadows await them.[127] Yet the destiny of ordinary people was not as certain as that of the royals and seemed much bleaker. A Hittite fragment designated as KUB 48.109 says that the denizens of the underworld "do not recognize each other," "do not eat good food" or "drink... good drink," but "eat bits of mud" and "drink muddy waters."[128] Thus, the gloomy Hittite Netherworld region corresponds in major details to the Mesopotamian view of the realm and state of the dead. Moreover, the old Hittite *Telipinu Myth* parallels the same view of the Netherworld as a dark and dreary city. Consequently, the fear of death was prevailing, and a long life was preferred.

On the other hand, a passage in one of the funerary texts from Kizzuwatna appears to indicate that the green meadows of the Netherworld are open not only to the royalty but to

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assume the preexistence of an established Hurrian original, which had been already in circulation among the Hurrian elite and priestly circles for some time. Based on the Hittite adoption of the same tradition with all of its elements without any substantial alteration, we can conclude that the Mesopotamian theology and ideology related to the heavenly or primordial city were positively naturalized in Syro-Anatolia during LBA and close to the dawn of EIA.

[126] The archaeological data corroborates the notion that some kind of belief in the afterlife was widespread, as evidenced by the grave gifts and food offerings left at the sides of individuals of all classes. Volkert Haas and Heidemarie Koch, *Religionen des Alten Orients: Band 1: Hethiter und Iran* (Göttingen, D: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 206.

[127] One of the prayers to the Sun-god contains a vivid picture of this pastoral paradise. Maciej Popko, *Religions of Asia Minor*, trans. Iwona Zych (Warsaw, PL: Academic Publications Dialog, 1995), 152–153. "And have this meadow duly made for him, O Sun God! Let no one wrest it from him or contest it with him! Let cows, sheep, horses, and mules graze for him on this meadow!" Gary M. Beckman, "Herding and Herdsmen in Hittite Culture," in *Documentum Asiae Minoris Antiquae: Festschrift für Heinrich Otten zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. Erich Neu and Christel Rüster (Wiesbaden, D: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1988), 44.

[128] Harry A. Hoffner, "A Scene in the Realm of the Dead," in *Scientific Humanist: Studies in Memory of Abraham Sachs*, ed. Erle Leichty, Maria Dej Ellis, and Pamela Gerardi (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Museum, 1988), 192.

ordinary people too.[129] Thus, a person would continue to exist as a shepherd or a farmer.[130]

Myth

The Disappearance of Telipinu

This myth contains a quite unique and astonishing passage related to the "Dark Earth," or the realm of the dead that is locked beyond "the seven doors" protected by "the gatekeeper."[131] It echoes the same imagery so familiar from *The Descent of Inanna/Ishtar to the Netherworld*. Considering the antiquity of *The Telipinu Myth*, the question is whether this evocation was a product of the early Assyrian colonization or the late influence of the Syrian scribes. Since almost all writings that contain ritual texts and mythopoeic compositions are from the imperial or temple collections, it is sensible to assume the latter. So, the concept found its place in Hittite syncretism. However, apart from a few scribes and some elite members of society, the prevailing majority of people had very vague and competing ideas on the afterlife.

Conclusion

The task of this chapter was to observe the ideas and concepts related to the city in Syrian and Anatolian literature. The analysis of selected writings demonstrates that the concept of city is quite obscure in strikingly faint cosmology, theogony, cosmogony, and anthropogony.

The Eblaite writings reflect the situation of economic and political centralization in a tribal pastoral society. Concordantly, the single surviving mythological/hymnic document that contains a brief cosmogony does not refer to the city in any way. Likewise, the small Sumerian/Akkadian literary collection reflects certain agendas without the city in its purview.

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[129] Taracha, *Religions of Second Millennium Anatolia,* 160–61.

[130] Haas and Koch, *Religionen des Alten Orients*, 205–6.

[131] "The gatekeeper opened the seven doors. He drew back the seven bars. Down in the Dark Earth stand bronze palhi-vessels. Their lids are of lead. Their latches are of iron. That which goes into them does not come up again; it perishes therein. So may they seize Telipinu's anger, wrath, sin, and sullenness, and may they not come back (here)." Hoffner, *Hittite Myths*, 19.

Even the geography and design of the Netherworld are completely absent.

The character of the material in Hittite libraries corresponds to specific MBA and LBA periods and reflects several strains of temporal and spatial influences, which were local, like Hatti and Luwian, and external, like Hurrian and Akkadian. The OHK-recorded myths are local and reflect indigenous concerns. Their narration is usually set within the urban context, which presents the cities as homes and estates of divinities. Likewise, the city is a fitting place to perform rituals and offer sacrifices to the gods.

The ideas on the city in NHK literature are much more pronounced and have some cosmological overtones. In a narrow sense, the divine realm corresponds to human society. Teshub, with his family, rules both the divine world and the land of Hatti. The other gods and their families rule over their cities. At times, gods dwell in cities and houses without humans, obviously in a primeval environment. Thus, gods live in primordial and heavenly cities, as well as in well-known earthly cities. The purpose of man is to serve gods and attend to their needs.

The Hittite Netherworld region corresponds in major details to the common ANE view of the realm and the state of the dead. Specifically, it parallels the Mesopotamian view of the Netherworld as a dark and gloomy city.[132] This view stands in sharp contrast with the traditional Hatti/Luwian "Elysian Fields" type of afterlife.

The major problem in assessing theological/ideological ideas related to the city in Syria and Anatolia consists of (a) a scarcity of literary monuments with a singular MBA cache of documents in Ebla and (b) a long interim period between LBA and EIA Hittite literary activity. Regardless, whatever material is available is sufficient to infer some conclusions.

In Ebla's case, the local deities are the tribal gods that are not envisioned as the creators

[132] When referring to the destiny of the dead *The Telipinu Myth* echoes the same imagery present in Sumerian and Akkadian *The Descent of Inanna/Ishtar to the Netherworld*.

of the universe but as the unifiers and protectors of the tribe, especially the king. Thus, the kingship and the deification of the king do not appear to be functionally related to city *per se*. Whatever locally produced religious literature remains does not ascribe any cosmological place or importance to the city and its institutions, even to the temple. In line with this, whatever Akkadian tradition was present in Ebla does not appear to be of any consequence in influencing the native cosmological ideas. Thus, based on the presently available resources, it does not appear that the city as a concept was considered of any importance in Eblaite thought.

In a similar manner, the old Hittite myths reflect the Hatti/Luwian conceptual world in which the city does not have any prominent place. Accordingly, the city is remarkably dissociated from any actual cosmological content and is merely ornamental. Thus, occasional elevated presentations of the city can either be the result early Assyrian or of somewhat later Syro-Mesopotamian scribal influences.

The later Hittite literature reflects the attitude present in Mesopotamia that the polity's successful organization is reflected in the organization of the divine realm. Hence, the gods are the guarantors of unity and the protectors of the state. Although the Hittite cities and towns had their own patron deities, the nature of that relationship is not exactly clear. Essentially, a city was a host of a deity, and his or her temple was merely a temporary home. In reality, the royal court was the axis around which everything revolved, and it was the king who was the true lord of the city. Though the kings were divinely appointed to uphold the balance between human servitude and divine lordship, their primary task was to protect the land, not the city. In this constellation of ideology and theology, the state-sponsored cult served to support the king and had strong geneonymic character, which was a shared trait with Syria and the Levant. Likewise, the late Hurro-Hittite myths seem to contain rather superficial imports from the Mesopotamian pool of

tradition; they are not products of any local theological rumination and conviction. This research, therefore, contends that the complex concepts that would include, involve, and elaborate on the gods, the kingship, the city, and the temple and their interactions are largely absent from the Hittite reflection and literature, which renders the city of little importance.

Due to their distance from the Southern Levant, direct cultural and ideological influences from Syria and Anatolia are not expected in Canaan. However, because of their close proximity to the Northern Levant, their impact on the culture and ideology of Ugarit was tremendous.

Chapter 4: The City in Canaanite Literature

The Canaanites were the closest neighbors of Israel and Juda and, thus, generally seen as the greatest source of the local and primary conduit of Mesopotamian religious and cultural influence on these kingdoms. The purpose of this chapter is, therefore, to do a limited literary analysis of selected Canaanite writings and assess the main ideas related to the city in cosmogony, cosmology, and, consequently, eschatology in these texts. The primary focus will be on the various theological and ideological points contained in the Ugaritic myths and epics, as well as the writings of Philo of Byblos that illuminate the relationship between the city and the gods, kingship, the temple, and man. In the process, some preliminary observations regarding the presence and/or absence of the common Mesopotamian as well as Syrian and Anatolian mythemes in the Canaanite traditions and the local distinctions and developments will be noted. The intention of this chapter is to prepare the comparative points that would be contrasted with the biblical protology.

The City in Canaan

Canaan is often taken as a synonym for the Southern Levant, with which it roughly corresponds.[1] Due to the available resources, the region was settled very early during the Pre-Pottery Neolithic, thus paralleling the same trends observable in West Asia.[2] However, it passed through abortive and resuming phases that resulted in late urbanization. The successive periods witnessed progressive cultural changes[3] corresponding to the processes in Mesopotamia, yet they

[1] See Amihai Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible: 10,000 –586 B.C.E.*, rep. ed. (New Haven, CT; London, UK: Yale University Press, 1992), 3; Jonathan M. Golden, "Early Bronze Age," in *Encyclopedia of Prehistory*, ed. Peter N. Peregrine and Melvin Ember, vol.8 (New York, NY: Springer, 2002); Suriano, 9–10; Greenberg, *Bronze Age Levant*, 3–4.

[2] The Natufian Culture (10,500-8500 BC), see Mazar, *Archaeology*, 36. Likewise, see Edward Banning, "Aceramic Neolithic," in *Encyclopedia of Prehistory*, ed. Peter N. Peregrine and Melvin Ember, vol.8 (New York, NY: Springer, 2002); passim.

[3] Edward Banning, "Ceramic Neolithic," in *Encyclopedia of Prehistory*, ed. Peter N. Peregrine and Melvin

followed their particular traits.[4]

The Origin of the City in Canaan

The history of urban development in Canaan is very long and complex due to the physical characteristics of the area and close cultural influences coming from the surrounding regions and lands.[5] Only the coming of EBA (3500–2000 BC), also referred to as the Early Canaanite or Proto-Canaanite Period, will see the consolidation and gradual transition[6] of various settlements from proto-urban farming villages and towns into fully developed cities. Accordingly, many large urban centers distinguished themselves and consolidated the rural hinterland under their rule, thus forming a polity around a city-state.[7] However, during EB II/III two regions of the Southern Levant differentiated themselves, which are known as Northern Culture (Northern Canaan)[8] and Southern Culture (Southern Canaan).[9] In turn, they fell under and followed different influences,[10] while preserving awareness of their regional uniqueness.

Ember, vol.8 (New York, NY: Springer, 2002).

[4] See Mazar, *Archaeology*, 56–59, 87–88; Banning, *Ceramic Neolithic*; Thomas E. Levy, "Chalcolithic," in *Encyclopedia of Prehistory*, ed. Peter N. Peregrine and Melvin Ember, vol.8 (New York, NY: Springer, 2002).

[5] Harrison suggests "indirect influence" or "asymmetrical culture contact" as the impetus for urban processes in Palestine. However, he points only to Egypt and its cultural impact on the Southern Levant during the EB I period, particularly referring to the Egyptian pottery and other objects in the Negev area, and later questions the extent of this influence. See Timothy P. Harrison, "The Southern Levant," in *A Companion to the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, ed. Daniel T. Potts (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 633–34 and 636–37; Golden, *Early Bronze Age*.

[6] Eliot Braun, "Of Pots and Towns: Old and New Perspectives on EB I of the Southern Levant," in *Daily Life, Materiality, and Complexity in Early Urban Communities of the Southern Levant: Papers in Honor of Walter E. Rast and R. Thomas Schaub*, ed. Meredith S. Chesson (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 269.

[7] Golden, *Early Bronze Age*; Pierre De Miroschedji, "The Southern Levant (Cisjordan) During the Early Bronze Age," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Levant: C. 8000-332 BCE*, ed. Margreet L. Steiner and Ann E. Killebrew (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2018), 307–29.

[8] It covers an area from Tyre in Lebanon to the northern edge of the Shephelah and from the Mediterranean coast to central Jordan valley up north along the Mediterranean coast to slightly above Byblos. Mazar, 107.

[9] It stretches from Shephelah to Negev and from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan Valley. See Greenberg, *Bronze Age Levant*, 75.

[10] The north did not come under Egypt's direct sphere of influence; however, this changed in time with the steady buildup of Egypt's interest in the area. On the other hand, the affinities to the influences coming from the Northern Levant are clearly observable in many aspects throughout EBA. Thus, there is great similarity and spatial

The Middle Bronze Age (2000–1350 BC),[11] often called the Middle Canaanite Period, is a period of fast and intense urbanization of the whole region of the South Levant.[12] The political organization of the Canaanite city-state was rooted in the tribal structure that was affected by steady and overall urbanization, thus demanding an increased complexity in governing.[13] However, the Canaanite urban society collapsed around 1450 BC[14] due to still-not-completely understood reasons. Interestingly, the Canaanite city-states did not disappear completely, especially the cities in the northern areas and along the Lebanon coast, which kept on thriving.[15]

At any rate, Canaanite urban development and the establishment of the city-state system are very long, unique,[16] and Gordian, paralleling in complexity some of the Mesopotamian urban phases. Yet, these processes lacked the stability and continuity that marked Sumer and, later, Babylonia. Unfortunately, the local writings that would offer insights into the dynamics and aspects of the aforementioned processes do not exist.

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continuity between Northern Canaan and Anatolia that is also observable along the coastal line going over Byblos to Ras Shamra. Golden, *Early Bronze Age*. The south displays an early and decisive Egyptian impact on culture and other aspects of life. However, Bottero writes that "Egypt's neighbors to the east were an entire bloc of Semitic peoples... who, undoubtedly for a long time, were already culturally organized and not very receptive to whatever might come to them from that foreign and exotic Nile River basin." Bottero, *Religion and Reasoning in Mesopotamia*, 5.

[11] Harrison takes the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt (ca. 1550 BC) as the terminal point of MBA and the commencement of LBA (1550–1200/1150 BC). Harrison, *Southern Levant*, 641–643.

[12] Dever writes that "by the Middle Bronze I period, some 65 percent of the population already lived in a relatively few large fortified cities." See William G. Dever, "The Middle Bronze Age: The Zenith of the Urban Canaanite Era," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 50, no. 3 (September 1987): 153. For regional influences, see Mazar, 188–89; Jonathan M. Golden, "Middle Bronze Age," in *Encyclopedia of Prehistory*, ed. Peter N. Peregrine and Melvin Ember, vol.8 (New York, NY: Springer, 2002).

[13] Complete urbanization, which means incorporation of religious and administrative functions into the city and integration of the rural chora, happened in the MB II period as a result of processes that happened between 1800–1600 BC. See Greenberg, *Bronze Age Levant*, 224–26.

[14] Not all scholars accept the same date or, even, a particular date to indicate the beginning of the collapse. The decline was gradual and long; likewise, this process that Harrison characterizes as "ruralization" did not affect all regions to the same extent. See Harrison, *Southern Levant*, 644–45.

[15] See Greenberg, *Bronze Age Levant*, 183–184; also, Mazar, *Archaeology*, 226–27.

[16] Ibid., 110.

Canaan and the Canaanites

Questions, such as what constituted the land of Canaan and who were the Canaanites, are complex and not easy to answer. However, the geographic characteristics of the region stayed fairly stable throughout history.[17] Also, the prevailing view is that the Canaanites were Western Semites, more particularly the Amorites. In time, the Hurrian presence in the northern urban centers started growing, especially toward the end of the MBA. In contrast, the southern regions remained mono-ethnical.[18] From a cultural standpoint, Canaanites were an agglomeration of different tribal groups, mostly pastoral nomads, who inhabited Canaan.[19]

During the MBA/LBA, Canaan was still seen by the surrounding nations and kingdoms as a geographical and political entity. Yet, its inhabitants did not perceive themselves as Canaanites but retained strong tribal and locality ties and identities. Only later, through a complex process of breaking off and segmentation, small fiefdoms started forming culturally and linguistically separate ethnic agglomerations that became Ammon, Moab,[20] Edom,[21] Israel,

[17] See Mazar, *Archaeology*, 185; Oded Tammuz, "Canaan—A Land Without Limits," *UF* 33 (2001): 510–17 and 532–35.

[18] Golden, *Middle Bronze Age*.

[19] See Aaron J. Brody and Roy J. King, "Genetics and the Archaeology of Ancient Israel," *HB* Open Access Pre-Prints, paper 44 (2013), http://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/humbiol_preprints/44 (accessed June 27, 2022), 14–20. Likewise, see Marc Haber et al., "Continuity and Admixture in the Last Five Millennia of Levantine History from Ancient Canaanite and Present-Day Lebanese Genome Sequences," *AJHG* 101, no. 2 (August 3, 2017): 274–82. For a thorough discussion on the origin of the Canaanites, see Glenn M. Schwartz, "An Amorite Global Village: Syrian-Mesopotamian Relations in the Second Millennium B.C.," in *Cultures in Contact: From Mesopotamia to the Mediterranean in the Second Millennium B.C.*, ed. Joan Aruz, Sarah Graff, and Yelena Rakic (New York, NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013), passim; Greenberg, *Bronze Age Levant*, 187–88.

[20] On the origins and history of Moab, see Bruce Routledge, *Moab in the Iron Age: Hegemony, Polity, Archaeology* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 87–113; for a summary of the history of Ammon, see Randall W. Younker, "The Emergence of the Ammonites," in *Ancient Ammon*, ed. Burton MacDonald and Randall W. Younker (Leiden, NL; Boston, MA: Brill, 1999), 181–218.

[21] For a brief outline of Edom's history, see Mary Ellen Buck, *The Canaanites: Their History and Culture from Texts and Artifacts* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2019), 57–94. The paucity of historical sources, both documents and archaeological artifacts, makes the reconstruction of the history and religion of these geopolitical entities very difficult. All we know is that they emerged from the MBA Canaanite background and developed into distinctive societies that dominated the southern Levant landscape for almost five hundred years.

Phoenicians,[22] and Philistines. This emergence of the new identities became quite obvious following the catastrophe caused by the Sea Peoples, who ushered in the political and economic fall of the Levantine superpowers at the end of the LBA and the dawn of the IA I periods (1200–950 BC). The archaeological evidence related to this epoch demonstrates the existence of thriving kingdoms that kept extending their boundaries, as well as the cultural demarcation between these political units and the consequent development of distinctive identities.

The Phoenicians

The seacoast strip stretching from modern Akre in Israel to Tripoli in Lebanon contained a number of city-states, such as Tyre, Sidon, Beirut, and Byblos, which fell into obscurity at the end of LBA and the beginning of IA I. After this break, the situation changed in IA II–III when this area reemerged politically and economically; however, it came out affected by fundamental religious, ideological, and sociopolitical changes. The region was named Phoenicia and its people Phoenicians by the Greeks; however, they called their land Canaan and themselves Canaanites. Much is written about the Phoenicians, so the outlines of their history and beliefs are fairly well known. Just like the other Canaanite kingdoms, every Phoenician city-state associated itself with a particular royal deity, thus creating a local pantheon and, consequently, tradition.[23] The old gods known in Ugarit, except El and Baal, were not present anymore and they were replaced with the new deities, such as Rashaph, Melqart, and others, arranged not anymore, in triads but in dyads. The Phoenicians survived longer than the other Canaanite kingdoms, such as Edom, Moab, and Ammon.[24]

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[22] Maria E. Aubet, *The Phoenicians and the West: Politics, Colonies and Trade*, trans. Mary Turton, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, GB: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 126.

[23] As Aubert rightly observes, it "is not correct to speak of the Phoenician pantheon or the Phoenician religion because each city, shut in around its king and its god, had its own local pantheon." Ibid., 126.

[24] See Sabatino Moscati, *The World of the Phoenicians*, trans. Alastair Hamilton (London, GB: Cardinal, 1973), 27–54.

The particular result of the MBA/LBA religious and ideological break with the past brought the emergence of the new national gods never attested before. Such was the case of Melqart, Esmun, and Reshef, who became the heads of greatly reduced pantheons in their respective cities. Melqart was introduced or "invented" in the time of Hiram I to effectively replace Baal Hadad in Tyre.[25] Consequently, he was considered the founder and patron of the city, the monarchy, and the colonies. The spring festival dedicated to Melqart was also instituted by Hiram I, thus linking him with fertility. Melqart means "king of the city," and he was referred to as the "Lord of Tyre." His consort was Astarte, and the dyad formed the pantheon of the city. Melqart is considered by some scholars "a theological exaltation of the king, as such, the ancestor of the city, the hypostasis of the king and, in short, the king himself."[26] At any rate, the king of Tyre was altogether deified, and he and Melqart represented the embodiment of the state. Thus the religion of Tyre appears as an extension of the kingship and a subject of royal interests. The whole concept was a novelty to Canaan and was not replicated in other Phoenician cities.

Israel and Judah

Israelites and Judahites are seen by many scholars as having the same Canaanite roots as the neighboring nations. However, their ascent was somewhat different in comparison with the adjacent kingdoms and can be traced to two different phases. The first, very modest and rural, is tied to the hilly countryside during the IA I period. The second phase commenced with the IA II–III period (950 BC and on) and was marked with a sudden full urbanization of the regions, which is seen as directly related to the emergence of the monarchies.[27]

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[25] Melqart was both a cosmic and chthonic deity and one of the representations of El. Also, on the use of *qart*, "city," as a synonym for the Netherworld, see, Marvin H. Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts* (Leiden, NL: Brill, 1955), 26–27.

[26] Aubet, *Phoenicians*, 126–29.

[27] Buck, *Canaanites*, 57–94.

The City in Canaan: The Case of Ugarit

Contrary to the general opinion, Ugarit has never been part of Canaan, either geographically,[28] culturally,[29] or politically. The city and its domain were quite outside of the northern borders of the Southern Levant and/or Canaan.[30] The citizens of Ugarit never considered themselves Canaanites, and Canaan was for them a faraway foreign country.[31] This city-state was better situated in its immediate context, which was Syrian (Amorite)[32] and Anatolian (Hurrian).[33] Thus, any possible cultural, ideological and religious connection between Ugarit and Canaan should be viewed within the larger panorama of the Levant as a whole or, more particularly, within its Syro-Palestinian and Northwest-Semitic background.[34]

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[28] Marguerite Yon, *The City of Ugarit at Tell Ras Shamra* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 9–12.

[29] "The culture of Ugarit was composite. It was all at the same time: a Syrian port with Mediterranean trade, a west Semitic city-state that was a vassal of the Hittite kingdom, and a Northwest Semitic population in a cuneiform world. Whatever measure we use—personal names, language, religion, or material culture—Ugarit appears to be an eclectic admixture of Syrian, Canaanite, Egyptian, Mediterranean, and Mesopotamian cultures. (see, e.g., KTU 1.40 vi, 35–43)." William M. Schniedewind and Joel H. Hunt, *A Primer on Ugaritic: Language, Culture, and Literature* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 15.

[30] Gibson writes that "the general usage in the Bible where the term denotes all the pre- and non-Israelite inhabitants of the Levant without distinction of race. In extra-biblical sources there is only a territory Canaan, which included the Palestinian and Phoenician coasts but did not apparently reach as far north as Ugarit." See John Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends*, 2nd ed. (London, GB; New York, NY: T&T Clark International, 2004), 1 n.2.

[31] "It is evident that Canaan was a well-defined foreign territory, like Egypt and Ashdod, and that Ugarit was located outside its borders... It is evident that Canaan was regarded at Ugarit as a foreign land whose name was enough to define the origin of individuals and groups of people." Nadav Na'aman, "The Canaanites and Their Land," *UF* 26 (1994): 403–4.

[32] Buck writes that "textual sources from the Middle and Late Bronze Age provide additional evidence for religious and ritual parallels between the site of Ugarit and the other Amorite sites of Mari, Alalaḫ, and Ebla... there was a close cultural affiliation between the site of Ugarit and its Amorite neighbors at Mari, Qaṭna, Alalaḫ, and Ebla." See Mary E. Buck, *The Amorite Dynasty of Ugarit: Historical Implications of Linguistic and Archaeological Parallels* (Leiden, NL; Boston, MA: Brill, 2019), 261–62.

[33] A significant amount of religious texts is Hurrian. Ibid., 8–10.

[34] See William F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan: A Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1968), 116. Mazar writes that the "city of Ugarit (Ras Shamra) in northern Syria has provided the most significant and authentic documentation for the study of Canaanite culture. Although this important coastal city-state was outside the borders of the Egyptian province of Canaan, and its own inhabitants did not consider themselves Canaanites, the Ugaritic language was a Canaanite dialect, and Ugarit's local culture may be viewed within the broader context of Canaanite civilization." See Mazar, *Archaeology*, 237. However, the material evidence points out that the stream of influence flowing from the north to the south was much stronger and more decisive during LBA. Thus, Cyrus H. Gordon writes that "Ugaritic culture had penetrated Palestine before the Israelite Conquest is indicated by the discovery of Ugaritic inscriptions at sites such as Beth

On the other hand, the primary reason for a common identification of Ugarit with Canaan is the shared pantheon, which, again, is not without challenges. Likewise, the sacred geography of some Ugaritic religious and epic texts places the events in the Sinai Peninsula and Negev regions;[35] however, this raises even more questions concerning the origin and dating of these traditions.[36] Also, the spatial and temporal distance between MBA/LBA Ugarit and IA Palestine raises even more concern related to the "shared" beliefs and practices.[37]

The kingdom of Ugarit was a city-state in the Northern Levant, well positioned on the route that connected Mesopotamia through Mari, Ebla, and Emar with the Mediterranean Sea.[38] Thus, Ugarit became one of the most important trade centers and ports of the ANE world and greatly benefited from her advantageous environment and location.[39] The majority of the citizens of the kingdom were Semites and Hurrians.[40] By 2400 BC, it became a recognized commercial center on the Mediterranean coast,[41] while the peak of urbanization in Ugarit and its economic, political, and cultural eminence happened during the MB and LBA periods, to which all written resources produced in the city and its environs are dated.

Shemesh and Mount Tabor in Israel. At Afeq an Akkadian tablet was discovered concerning a person mentioned in the Ugaritic archives." See Cyrus Gordon, *Ebla*, 296.

[35] Claude F. A. Schaeffer, *The Cuneiform Texts of Ras Shamra-Ugarit* (London, UK: Oxford University Press, 1939), 57–58.

[36] Albright points to the bulk of locations in Lebanon, particularly Tyre, Sidon, and Byblos. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 117–118 and 120.

[37] "The need for this caution is shown by the recent exaggeration of the importance of the material from Ras Shamra. That material is admittedly of great importance for the history of the Near East in the second millenium B.C., but for the understanding of the bulk of the OT, which dates from about the middle of the first millenium, it is somewhat less relevant than would be the material preserved in mediaeval French mystery plays for the understanding of the English deists of the early eighteenth century." Morton Smith, *Studies in the Cult of Yahweh*, ed. Shaye J. D. Cohen, vol. 1: Studies in Historical Method, Ancient Israel, Ancient Judaism (Leiden, NL: Brill, 1995), 15.

[38] Akkermans and Schwartz, *Archaeology of Syria*, 336.

[39] Michael C. Astour, "Ma'hadu, the Harbor of Ugarit," *JESHO*, no. 13 (1970): 114–16.

[40] Also, there were numerous residents from all over the known world. Schniedewind and Hunt, *Primer on Ugaritic*, 8.

[41] If Ebla's administrative texts happen to refer to it (ca. 1800 BC). Yon, *City of Ugarit*, 16.

City, Writing, and Literature in Ugarit

The records found in Ugarit cover a variety of genres, such as business documents, private letters, omen-text, offering lists, and the like.[42] When it comes to literary texts, Cyrus Gordon in his classic anthology suggests twofold division into poetic and semi-poetic writings, of which the first are myths and legends and the second consists of various liturgical, epistolary, diplomatic, administrative, and hippiatric texts, as well as miscellaneous lists.[43] This construct is still valued despite its general tenor that lacks precision, especially due to the interchangeable use of both prose and poetry in many literary units, not to mention poetic prose style.[44] A remarkable thing is that writings and inscriptions in Ugaritic language[45] and script were found at various close and remote places along the Levantine coast.[46] At any point, the history of writing

[42] Seventeen different locations contained archives with various writings; see Schniedewind and Hunt, *Primer on Ugaritic*, 33. Present are, too, school works that included abecedaries and tablets with the practice indicating the existence of the scribal schools. Thus, the importance of Ugarit extends beyond trade, since it is (a) the place where one of the early inventions and utilizations of the consonantal alphabet script happened, and (b) it appears to be the regional center of scribal training and learning. Ibid., 33–34. Also, Yves Calvet, "Ugarit: The Kingdom and the City—Urban Features," in *Ugarit at Seventy-Five*, ed. K. Lawson Jr. Younger (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 101.

[43] Cyrus H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Literature: A Comprehensive Translation of the Poetic and Prose Texts* (Roma, I: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1949), passim.

[44] Meindert Djikstra, "Ugaritic Prose," in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, ed. Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt (Boston, MA: Brill Academic Pub, 1999), 140–41.

[45] The Ugaritic was the language of everyday communication and the cult, while Akkadian was the language of diplomacy and trade. See John Gray, *Legacy of Canaan: The Ras Shamra Texts and Their Relevance to the Old Testament*, 2nd rev. ed. (Brill, 1965), 2–3. The majority of the population of Ugarit was comprised of the Semites; their language, labeled Ugaritic, is considered a dead offshoot within the Northwest Semitic family of languages. To this family also belong Canaanite, Phoenician, Aramaic, and Hebrew. Some scholars propose that the Ugaritic, together with Phoenician and Hebrew, belong to the Canaanite subgroup, which is a highly contested idea due to the geographical and historical distance between the Ugaritic and the Canaanite written sources. Schniedewind and Hunt, *Primer on Ugaritic*, 33. Regardless, the parallels between Ugaritic and the later Canaanite dialects are obvious; moreover, the essential similarity with Hebrew is quite remarkable and covers grammar, literary conventions, and lexemes. Yet, this can be a result of the activity of the Ugaritic scribal schools that lasted for centuries, thus affecting the wider area of the Levant populated with the West Semites; see Gray, *Legacy of Canaan*, 4. The picture becomes even more complicated with Ugaritic-Eblaite affinities, as well as Akkadian; see Matthiae, *Ebla*, 161; Gray, *Legacy of Canaan*, 3–4. Although the long-lasting debate is still going on, the final verdict will definitely be consequential for further Ugaritic/Canaanite research. However, it seems that comparative studies corroborate the conclusion that Ugaritic belongs to the norther branch of Semitic languages; see Buck, *Amorite Dynasty of Ugarit*, 29–30 and 49–64.

[46] Adrian Curtis, "Ras Shamra, Minet El-Beida and Ras Ibn Hani: The Material Sources," in *Handbook of*

in Ugarit starts with the 14th century BC and ends with the destruction of the city and the dissolution of the kingdom in the 12th century BC.

Defining City within Its Canaanite Context: The Case of Ugarit

As previously noted, one of the problems with most of the ANE regions outside of Mesopotamia is the lack of extensive and, at times any literature providing a deeper insight into the ideological and speculative world of the people that lived there. Thus, the remaining physical witnesses, their elements, organization, and relationships are the only indicators of the ideas, concerns, and priorities of their builders. Saying this, the most prominent and protected structures in Ugarit were the royal palace and the temple area, with the royal palace clearly dominant, thus indicating the priorities of the inhabitants.[47]

The City and Religion of Ugarit

The religion of Ugarit was a mélange of various elements and strains of influences, of which the one close to LBA/IA Canaan is regarded as very prominent. Likewise, the Hittite and Hurrian components were very much present and quite consequential.[48] Several texts in both Ugaritic and Akkadian contain so-called *God Lists* that enumerate the complete pantheon,[49] with the divine triad made of El, Dagan, and Baal at the top.[50] Many of the gods mentioned in these

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Ugaritic Studies, ed. Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt (Boston, MA: Brill Academic Pub, 1999), 12–13.

[47] See Yon, *City of Ugarit*, passim.

[48] Schniedewind and Hunt, *Primer on Ugaritic*, 18.

[49] The relative importance of different gods within the pantheon was indicated by their place in *The Gods List*, the consecration of the temple, and their role in the myth. El is the principal ruler of the universe and patron of the kings; his authority is supreme, and the other gods depend on him and need his approval for their actions. Although the assembly of gods exists, it does not have any prominent role, and its activity hardly extends beyond regular feasts. Athirat, El's consort, is paradoxically his daughter, wife, and, also, his creation that serves as El's executive, at least in a ritual sense. She is the mother of the seventy deities, which are known as the "gracious gods."

[50] The pantheon itself was comprised of three tiers of deities: (1) El was the ruler of cosmos, the creator of everything, and with his consort Athirat, "the Great Lady," he fathered the other gods; (2) these "sons of god" were to a certain degree consociated to the natural phenomena, such as Baal (the storm), Shapash (the sun), and Yam (the sea) or with crafts and existential realities, such as Anat (war and hunting), Mot (death), and Kothar (technology); and (3) several minor deities subservient to the main gods. See Schniedewind and Hunt, *Primer on Ugaritic*, 18.

list also appear later in IA Canaanite/Phoenician inscriptions, yet the later pantheons and the patron gods are different, organized in dyads, and as numerous as the cities under their patronage.

Baal, the son of Dagan[51] (or, in some sources, El), is considered the Amorite storm-god Baal Hadad. Due to his accomplishments, presumably as a warrior, he is granted the kingship by El. On the mundane level, the kingship was delegated to the king of Ugarit; thus, Baal is the "'Lord of Ugarit'... the patron and protector of the city."[52] His palace, which symbolizes his exaltation as the king over heaven and earth is built of silver and gold and situated on Mount Saphon.[53] Mot and Yam are the rulers of their respective realms and appear as Baal's principal competitors in the mythological texts. However, they do not figure prominently in Ugarit's worship.

The City and the Temple in Ugarit

The Acropolis, with its high and sizable Baal and Dagan temples, dominated Ugarit.[54] Their layouts resemble the Semitic shrine pattern that consists of the "inner sanctum, outer room and sacred precinct or courtyard."[55] Quite in accordance with the prevailing ANE beliefs, the temples were considered "houses" of gods, and they were places where similar liturgical and sacrificial practices common to Syria and Mesopotamia were performed.[56]

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[51] Dagan's place was one of honor, and he enjoyed popular adoration without taking any role in Ugarit's mythology.

[52] Nicolas Wyatt, "The Religion of Ugarit: An Overview," in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, ed. Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt (Boston, MA: Brill Academic Pub, 1999), 544–45.

[53] Anat is his sister, daughter, consort, assistant in struggles with other deities, and, also, the killer of the sea dragon.

[54] Two other temples have been identified: a small chapel-like "Hurrian Temple" in the Royal Zone and, so-called, "Rhyton Temple" in the center of the city, which could be the shrine of El. Curtis, *Ras Shamra*, 16.

[55] Ibid., 14.

[56] It seems that the temple auxiliary buildings included the storages for produce and animals needed for the rituals, yet there are no signs of a particular temple economy and/or redistribution. The temples were supported by a

In line with the physical and ethical/moral anthropomorphism of the ANE world, the statues of Ugarit deities were hosted in the temples, where they were ritually fed, bathed, and dressed. A substantial amount of high-quality food, drink, cloth, and every kind of material was geared to the sanctuary to satisfy the needs of any regular and festive cultic occasion. On the other hand, the need and dependence for provision for gods and humans were mutual. In this aspect, the treatment of gods in Ugarit reflected the Mesopotamian and Hittite counterparts.[57] However, according to the surviving ritual texts, the primary function of the cultus was to support the monarchy. The resources for the temple personnel and cult were provided by the royal palace; thus, the temples can be considered a part of the state religion.[58]

Other towns and villages within the kingdom had their own local shrines and priests, which were, to a large degree, controlled by the crown. The liturgical texts point out that the countryside, too, participated in at least some of the king's cultic acts, which were performed in the capital, Ugarit.[59] However, there were also self-standing temples outside cities memorializing the sacred locations, thus implying that the mythological ties with the city were quite loose[60] or nonexistent.

The Temple in Cosmology

Unlike Sumerian and Akkadian writings that often give either an extended or a summarized cosmological overview, the Ugarit texts are remarkably void of such content. The

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large number of various officials, such as high priests, priests-diviners, singers, musicians, and general servants, who attended the ritual and their other needs and functions. See Michael Heltzer, *The Internal Organization of the Kingdom of Ugarit: Royal Service-System, Taxes, Royal Economy, Army and Administration* (Wiesbaden, D: Reichert Verlag, 1982), 132–133 and 135–39. Also, Juan-Pablo Vita, "The Society of Ugarit," in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, ed. Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt (Boston, MA: Brill Academic Pub, 1999), 474–75.

[57] Michael B. Hundley, *Gods in Dwellings: Temples and Divine Presence in the Ancient Near East* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2015), 360–61.

[58] Schniedewind and Hunt, *Primer on Ugaritic*, 20–21.

[59] Heltzer, *Internal Organization*, 132–33.

[60] Liverani, *Ancient Near East*, 346.

cosmological imagery is almost absent, and whatever rudiments are there, they are dispersed in various texts. At any rate, the cumulative evidence presents the sea as the visible part of the Cosmic River that surrounds the earth both horizontally and vertically. In the center of the earth is the Cosmic Mountain, Saphon, which, in the physical sense, rises on the northern border of the kingdom. The mount is the habitation of Baal and "the gods of Saphon," who comprise the pantheon and participate in the assembly of gods.[61] El's throne is at the center of the "world-mountain" within the "sevenfold (seven chambers) palace," from which the four rivers flow into the world.[62] This Mountain holds together and connects heaven, earth, and the Underworld, the realm of gods and the realm of humans, and encompasses the whole world.[63] So, in this respect, Mount Saphon and El's world-mountain are identical. El's domain is divided into three parts, which are ruled by his three sons, the coregents: (1) Baal, the lord of the earth; (2) Yam, the lord of the sea; and (3) Mot, the lord the Underworld.

Mount Casius was imagined as the earthly representation of Mount Saphon and, consequently, deified and received sacrifices.[64] Although the temple is essentially a "local allomorph" of the Cosmic Mountain,[65] the axis of the universe and/or the omphalos that connects the realms are not textually associated with the temple *per se* and, thereby, with the city. Still, the temple, as well as its immediate surroundings, were constructed to replicate Mount Saphon[66]

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[61] There are issues arising from the Ugaritic texts and the reconstruction of the Canaanite mythology based on the Bible. They point out that the later "Canaanite ideas" are different from the concepts found in Ugarit. See Ronald E. Clements, *God and Temple* (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1965), 6–8.

[62] Wyatt, *Religion of Ugarit*, 531–585.

[63] Clements, *God and Temple*, 10–11.

[64] "[To Saphon, a ram]: to the sacred bride a ram and to [; to Yarih] a heifer; to Nikkal [a heifer; to the Mistress of the Temples two] birds; to the [divine] people [a heifer]; to the golds] a ewe; Sha[psh a heifer; Resh]ef a holocaust and commun[ion sacrifice; ditto, two ewes.]" (*KTU* 1.41 R 25). See Nicolas Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 2nd ed. (London, GB; New York, NY: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 352 and 388.

[65] Wyatt, *Religion of Ugarit*, 534.

[66] Ibid., 352 n.35.

and, somehow, deified to be a suitable dwelling place for a god.[67] Architecturally, the temples were smaller and followed a different layout than their Mesopotamian counterparts[68] with the inner sanctum representing the center of the universe and the deity's footstool, which was the actual divinized portal. On a practical level, this meant that the anthropomorphic imagery was focused on the statue; however, the cult was not as lavish and elaborate as in Babylonia. As the symbol of the cosmic abode of deities, the temple is paradoxically the place of the manifest presence of gods, and the locations of these sanctuaries by extension become important[69] and, by association, the cities become significant, but only as cultic places. So, unlike Mesopotamia, where the city and the temple were explicitly identified with the cosmic mountain, this was not the case in Ugarit/Canaan, where the divine mountain was seen as external to both.[70]

Kingship in Ugarit

Kingship in Ugarit was hereditary, and it was passed on in an unbroken dynastic chain for several generations.[71] It seems that the palace consolidated power and gradually imposed itself as the sole authority only by the end of LBA.[72] The king was a divinely appointed mediator between man and god and served as the high priest.[73] At the same time, he was the embodiment of Baal, whom he represented, and the son of El, who delegated his authority to the king. The king controlled many aspects of the religious life of Ugarit, and one of his sacred duties was to

[67] Hundley, *Gods in Dwellings*, 125.

[68] Generally speaking, the temple architecture followed the Syrian patterns, such as those observable in Alalakh and Ebla. Golden, *Middle Bronze Age*.

[69] Clements, *God and Temple*, 8–9.

[70] "The cosmic mountain can thus be a natural mountain that is transformed into the cosmic sphere, as in Israel and Canaan. As such it would correspond to the definition given by Andrzej Wiercinski that the cosmic mountain 'may be externally represented by a distinguished natural mountain on which the archetype of the Cosmic Mountain has been socio-culturally superprojected." See Lundquist, *Common Temple Ideology*, 53–76.

[71] Vita, *Society of Ugarit*, 467–68.

[72] Yon, *City of Ugarit*, 19.

[73] Heltzer, *Internal Organization*, 132.

maintain and restore sanctuaries in his domain.[74]

In general, the members of the royal family held various high positions in commerce and religion. Thus, in reality, the highest and undisputed authority in all aspects of the natural and spiritual life of Ugarit was concentrated in the hands of the king.[75] However, the relationship between the cult and the kingship was reciprocal.[76]

Deification of the King

It is not quite clear whether the king in Ugarit was ascribed divine status.[77] The ideological base of much of Ugaritic mythology, especially *The Baal Cycle,* and ritual serve to support the institution of the king.[78] The parallels between the king and the deities Baal and Athtar, however, never cross the boundary that separates human from divine in the related texts. Theology is given through the treatment of a particular mytheme, essentially symbolic and retains nature of a parable, which hints that the king is considered Baal's viceroy, who is (a) properly sanctioned and (b) expected to function as the divine king.[79] The ritual is even more explicit; it depicts the king symbolically entering heaven by climbing the temple's tower, receiving divine sanction, feeding gods, and returning to the earth to rule.[80] On the other hand, only after passing away were the deceased kings declared "Rapiu, the eternal king," thereby

[74] Heltzer, *Internal Organization*, 181.

[75] Ibid., 178–81. Also, Gray, *Legacy of Canaan*, 7–8; Vita, 468.

[76] The "person of the king was beholden to the gods, and his primary contact point with them was in the temple. Thus, although the cult likely depended on the king, the king likewise depended on the cult. Especially with the continual tumult in Syria-Palestine, the king's maintenance of the temple was deemed essential for his continued good relations with his patron deity and thus foundational to his and his people's welfare." Hundley, *Gods in Dwellings*, 129.

[77] Schniedewind and Hunt, *Primer on Ugaritic*, 16.

[78] Nicolas Wyatt, "The Religious Role of the King in Ugarit," in *Ugarit at Seventy-Five*, ed. K. Lawson Jr. Younger (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 42.

[79] Wyatt, *Religious Role of the King*, 47–51.

[80] Ibid., 54–58.

joining the royal ancestors and being considered a protector of the dynasty.[81] Regardless of the nature of deification, it was rather limited in degree and scope,[82] just as among the Hittites. Thus, the whole concept fits well within the purviews of geneonymy prevalent in Syria and Anatolia and does not immediately betray any trace of a temple vs. palace power struggle garbed in theology, as was the case in Mesopotamia. Therefore, the king was the absolute master and ruler of the city.

The City in Ugaritic Literature

There are four primary sources that inform us about Canaanite beliefs and practices, especially the cosmogonies: (1) the texts from Ugarit,[83] (2) the Hebrew Bible,[84] (3) various

[81] Schniedewind and Hunt, *Primer on Ugaritic*, 16. The crucial question is, are there texts indicating that cult was offered to a living king? However, this does not seem to be the case. See Wyatt, *Religious Role of the King*, 62. Even some compositions that hint at the sacred marriage between the king and a goddess are probably to be "best seen as proleptic, guaranteeing him a future immortality and divine status, rather than a present apotheosis." Wyatt, *Religious Role of the King*, 67. Nevertheless, there are several writings that some scholars understand as ascribing divine status to the deceased rulers. Thus, according to some interpretations of the fragmentary preserved *The Kings List of Ugarit* (*KTU* 1.113), deceased kings are declared divine; however, this reading is still debated. Itamar Singer, "A Political History of Ugarit," in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, ed. Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt (Boston, MA: Brill Academic Publishers, 1999), 610. Moreover, the dead kings are invoked in the litany to intercede on behalf of the living and the city of Ugarit before Baal (*KTU* 1.161). Likewise, they receive offerings and participate in funerals and other rites. Wyatt, *Religious Role of the King*, 63–66.

[82] Wyatt, *Religious Role of the King*, 62–63.

[83] The writings discovered in and around Ugarit contain various administrative, diplomatic, and legal records, as well as personal letters, literary works, and numerous lexical and word lists primarily in Babylonian and Ugaritic languages and scripts. The Babylonian collection consists of lexical, religious, and literary writings. See Wilfred H. Van Soldt, "Babylonian Lexical, Religious and Literary Texts and Scribal Education at Ugarit and Its Implications for the Alphabetic Literary Texts," in *Ugarit. Ein Ostmediterranes Kulturzentrum Im Alten Orient. Ergebnisse Und Perspektiven Der Forschung. Band I. Ugarit Und Seine Altorientalische Umwelt.*, ed. Manfried Dietrich and Oswald Loretz (Münster, D: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995), 176–78. The last category is made up of about several dozen of Sumerian and Akkadian religious and literary compositions with incantations, omens, hemerologies, fables, and wisdom,[83] thus reflecting common Syrian and Anatolian interests. While there are some epics, hymns, and prayers included—even a couple of library catalogs with Babylonian canonical titles—the texts with mythological content are conspicuously absent. Marc Van de Mieroop, "Beyond Babylonian Literature," in *Cultures in Contact: From Mesopotamia to the Mediterranean in the Second Millennium B.C.*, ed. Joan Aruz, Sarah Graff, and Yelena Rakic (New York, NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013), 279–80. The religious literature in Ugaritic is written in alphabetic script and consists of a few larger mythological compositions, a couple of epics, and several shorter texts that merge cultic and mythological elements. Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 14.

[84] The Hebrew Bible is considered a relatively late IA source yet of particular importance since it contains numerous passages that the scholars recognize as fairly accurate echoes of the Canaanite theomachies, cosmogonies, and ritual practices. However, the Bible is not a document created by the Canaanite authors.

inscriptions (Phoenician, Aramaic, and Punic), and (4) the fragments of Philo of Byblos.[85] The literature of Ugarit comes from a very specific point in the history of the city (14th–12th century BC) and is considered the most extensive and important source on the Canaanite intellectual and religious life. On the other hand, the inscriptions cover the IA period from the 7th century BC to the beginning of the new era, and their usability comes solely from the divine titles they contain. Finally, Philo's works represent a late compendium related to the Phoenician history and religious concepts recorded at the end of the first century AD.

The Ugaritic mythological and legendary material can be arranged in three cycles or groups: the Baal Cycle, the *Epic of Keret king of Hubur*, and the *Legend of the King Aqhat, Son of Danel*.[86] Despite the neat arrangement of the preserved material based on genres and the main characters, the *Epic of Keret* and the *Legend of Aqhat* are saturated with mythical elements, thereby rendering them indispensable as the sources proper.[87]

Myth

The Baal Cycle (Poems about Baal and Anath)

The Baal Cycle contains the most relevant texts on cosmogony; however, the scholarly opinions on whether it can be understood in that sense in its present state much differ.[88] Some of the elements pertinent to cosmogony do appear in the Cycle, such as theomachy,[89] kingship, and

[85] See Clifford, *Creation Accounts*, 117.

[86] The literature of Ugarit is designated as narrative poetry. Simon B. Parker, "Introduction," in *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, ed. Simon B. Parker (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997), 1–5.

[87] Likewise, they offer some insights into the history of Ugarit, as well as the rituals and ideology related to the royal cult. Samuel H. Hooke, *Middle Eastern Mythology* (Harmondsworth, GB; Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, 1968), 87–92. The utilization of the myths and the other texts in the liturgical context is still under debate, although there are hints that "they may have been read or enacted in the context of the worship of the temple." Curtis, *Ras Shamra*, 15.

[88] See Clifford, *Creation Accounts*, 119–20.

[89] According to Gibson, the Baal Cycle, as being structured around the struggles for preeminence between the gods, is largely, but not solely, "theomachic" in nature. See John C. L. Gibson "The Theology of the Ugaritic Baal Cycle," *Orientalia* 53, no. 2 (1984): 202.

the temple building; these are familiar themes from the Akkadian cosmogonies.

There are three basic themes that form the Cycle: (1) the initial struggle between Baal and Yam (T1/T2), (2) the building of Baal's palace (T3/T4), and (3) the final struggle between Baal and Mot (T5/T6).[90] The battle between Baal and Yam seems to be concerned with the establishment and maintenance of equilibrium[91] among two dominant and competing, arguably natural, powers and not by dominance and transfer of authority (KTU 1.1–2).[92] Though the context emphasizes Baal's vital role in the existence of humans (fertility) and the preservation of the world's order (kingship), he never creates anything,[93] and his power is obviously limited.[94]

In the middle episode, in which Baal gets the palace (*KTU* 1.4), he is acclaimed king by the assembly of gods. Despite his ruling and judging position, he is deprived of the main attribute of his authority, the palace.[95] Eventually, Baal builds a home for himself, thus gaining autonomy in his rule over the heavens and the earth.[96] The social aspect of this achievement finds its extension in kingship, which is the guarantor and maintainer of equilibrium in the human

[90] Gibson, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, 205.

[91] Baruch Margalit, "Death and Dying in the Ugaritic Epics," in *Death in Mesopotamia: Papers Read at the XXVIe Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale*, ed. Bendt Alster (Copenhagen, DK: Akademisk Forlag, 1980), 248.

[92] Gibson, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, 210. Such is Baal's encounter with Mot, too (*KTU* 1.5–1.6); however, Baal is overpowered with death, from which he is saved by El at the urge of Shapshu.

[93] Baal's battle with the sea-god does not appear within the creation framework or as a creative act at all. Moreover, El is the creator of everything and the supreme ruler of the universe. However, Baal's success as a warrior is the precondition for taking the kingdom (KTU 1.2). Once he takes dominion, the next step is the acquisition of the temple (KTU 1.3 and 4). This struggle does not appear either as the ordering of the world type of the myth, since neither the plot nor the language of the narrative justifies that conclusion. See John Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (Cambridge, GB; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 10–11. Likewise, none of his titles indicate that he has a creative role; only El and Ashera are attributed with such abilities and appropriately titled.

[94] For the opposite view, see Richard J. Clifford, "Cosmogonies in the Ugaritic Texts and in the Bible," *Orientalia* 53, no. 2 (1984): passim.

[95] In order to have it, he needs El's permission, which proves to be a daunting task.

[96] The victories of Baal over Yam, Leviathan, and other foes in Ugaritic texts involve additional divine actors, at least at times, and their participation proves essential and decisive. Regardless, Baal is declared king and receives permission to build a residence for himself. See Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon*, 12–16.

community.[97]

Although El is designated as the creator of the universe and mankind, there are no myths that would expand on these statements. Baal's pursuits, on the other hand, are elaborated on extensively and are in a function of the preservation of order in the world. Thus, the building of the heavenly palace for Baal appears as a token of his acquired and, importantly, delegated authority as El's viceroy[98] and not as a symbol or summary of the palingenetic or anticipatory creative processes that are at some point replicated in the world. Within this divine economy, the temple is given a prominent place as the intersection between the human and divine realms. Accordingly, the *Baal's Palace* myth makes a reference to a sanctuary, most likely the Baal's temple in Ugarit, which is repeatedly called as such and, thus, identified with the cosmic mountain.[99] However, *qrt*, "city," which in Ugaritic denotes a fortified enclosure,[100] does not appear relevant or consequential at all in the myth, not even as a container for the sanctuary, despite its cultic significance as the seat of the Baal's representative in the earth, the king. In this matter, the treatment of the city and its place in theology of Ugarit greatly differ in comparison with Babylonian,[101] as well as Syrian/Anatolian thought and tradition.

Hymns

Shachar and Shalim and the Gracious Gods

The liturgical text known as *Shachar and Shalim and the Gracious Gods* is quite

[97] *KTU* 1.3 gives a somewhat different version of the same event, except that it involves the victory of Baal over Yam and that it has a bearing on fertility. Yet again, the hero's power is limited and relevant only in terms of order in nature and society, as is reflected in his triumph over chaos and death that constantly threaten civilization.

[98] Gibson, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, 209.

[99] "Come, and I shall reveal it in the midst of my divine mountain, Saphon, in the sanctuary, on the mountain of my inheritance, in Paradise, on the height of victory" (KTU 1.3:25–30). Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 78.

[100] See Baruch Margalit, *The Ugaritic Poem of AQHT* (Berlin, GE: De Gruyter, 1989), 350.

[101] On similarities between *The Baal Cycle* and *Enuma Elish*, see excellent discussion in Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon*, 7–18.

interesting, albeit controversial due to the different renderings of some crucial key words by the translators, which are also pertinent to this inquiry. This poetic myth, hymn, or even a cultic burlesque[102] can be divided into two parts, of which the first is a mixture of matters related to cult and some fragments of myths, and the second part contains theogony, or the birth of the "gratuitous gods" Shachar and Shalim ("Dawn" and "Dusk").[103]

The hymn begins with the invocation of the divine twins, according to some scholars; the lines 3–4 suggest that the pair "established a city (*qrt*) on high in the desert" (*KTU* 1.23:3–4).[104] This reading is challenged, and it is proposed that the word in question should be translated as a "feast."[105] On the other hand, the word "offering" in the line close to the end of the poem, which says "raise (and) prepare (an offering) for lady Shapash and for the fixed stars" (*KTU* 1.23:54) is understood as a "large (city)" by some interpreters.[106] Moreover, there are recognizable literary patterns in the invocation section that resonate with some of the texts from Ebla, thus encouraging the idea that lines 3–4 should be linked with the founding of the city.[107]

However, despite the possibility that *Shachar and Shalim* hymn may indeed contain a reference (or, possibly, references) to a presumably heavenly or primordial city, there are no other texts in the corpus of Ugaritic literature that would add any further input along the same lines. Besides, the poem does not elaborate on the nature of this city nor gives any hint on how to understand it. Thus, the arguments proposing the other words and meanings in the

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[102] Theodore J. Lewis, "The Birth of the Gracious Gods," in *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, ed. Simon B. Parker (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997), 205.

[103] Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends*, 28–29.

[104] Ibid., 123.

[105] On different renderings, see Mark S. Smith, *The Rituals and Myths of the Feast of the Goodly Gods of KTU/CAT 1.23: Royal Constructions of Opposition, Intersection, Integration, And Domination* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 34–40; Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 325 n.3.

[106] Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends*, 126 n. 54; Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 333.

[107] M. S. Smith, *Goodly Gods*, 39 n. 13.

aforementioned passages seem justified.

Epics

The Epic of Keret

The Epic of Keret has been defined by scholars as a myth, legend, and epic, or even a hybrid of all of them.[108] This lengthy narrative poem is centered on Keret, a real or imaginary king of the city of Khabur, and his tragic loss of family and the subsequent restoration of it. The initial scholarly opinion was that the epic was yet another piece of monarchic propaganda; careful reading, however, reveals that it essentially represents a subtle reflection on and a critique of royal ideology.[109]

Although the central figure is the head of a city-state, the dominant scenery and background elements are rural and reminiscent of the ancient Amorite nomadic life in the steppes of western and central Syria. Still, there are at least a couple of instances in the poem that, through extended parallelism, connect the Baal's palace on Mount Saphon with the fortification on its lower peak, Nan, and, therefore, with the city. So, in a lament over his mortally ill father, one of Keret's sons says that even the realm of Baal, "the citadel of vast expanse," grieves for Keret.[110] Despite this seemingly clear reference to a fortified divine environ, the metaphors in the passage function to support the royal ideology, since within the larger context they link the divine throne and victory with the royal throne and victory.[111] In other words, the earthly kingship presupposes the heavenly one, which it replicates.

Thus, the myths and epics of Ugarit contain the notion of the divine mountain; moreover,

[108] Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 176.

[109] Baruch Margalit, "The Legend of Keret," in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, ed. Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt (Boston, MA: Brill Academic Pub, 1999), 207–10.

[110] "They weep for you, father, the mountain of Baal, Saphon, the holy stronghold of Nan, the mighty stronghold, the citadel of vast expanse" (KTU 1.16:5–9). Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 220 and 230.

[111] Ibid., 220 n.201.

the act of the building of the, presumably primordial, temple on Mount Saphon is quite prominent in them. However, even when there is a faint conceptual link between Baal's palace and city, it is rather incipient and thoroughly laconic. Consequently, the available textual material fails to illustrate the origin and/or describe the nature of the city in LBA Canaan.

The City in Ugaritic Eschatology

The destiny of the dead is, according to the Ugaritic texts, somber and grim and designated to the Netherworld in a state, which for all purposes borders on nonexistence.[112] The passages that talk about death and the afterlife are not often encountered, and when they are, they are quite terse. Yet, in general, the available material indicates Babylonian influences and reflects the shared North Semitic heritage.

Death is not limited to humans alone but is a serious threat even to the gods.[113] Indeed, Baal, in his struggle with Mot, dies; however, he enjoys privileged treatment in an area equivalent to Paradise and eventually, with the help of some other deities, returns to the realm of living.[114] The human state, on the other hand, is permanent, although it seems that some texts indicate a possibility that deification was not confined to the royalty alone but that it was extended to all. However, the nature of that "deification" was the union with the ancestors.

What can be deduced from various texts is the belief that whatever part of a person separates at the moment of death and survives ends up in "earth," which greatly resembles the biblical notion of Sheol. Yet, behind this simple designation is the idea of a place imagined as a

[112] Michael C. Astour, "The Nether World and Its Denizens at Ugarit," in *Death in Mesopotamia: Papers Read at the XXVIe Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale*, ed. Bendt Alster (Copenhagen, DK: Akademisk Forlag, 1980), 230.

[113] See Margalit, *Death and Dying*, 245–48.

[114] Ibid.

remote, deep, isolated, vast, and dusty cave ruled by Mot[115] from which there is no return.[116]

Myth

The Baal Cycle

The Netherworld in the Baal Cycle is referred to as a "city" (*qrt*), which is presented as the abode of Mot,[117] as well as the ghosts or shadows (*slm*) of the dead. Some very vivid metaphors and euphemisms are used to describe this place, such as "pit" and "filth,"[118] as is the case with the Baal's Palace myth.[119] Likewise, the myth of Baal and Mot offers an almost identical description with slightly different details that strengthen the already existing image.[120] Indeed, the name of the city, *Hamriya*, intensifies the overall sense of desperation since its name is a derivative of the verb that means to "pour water" and possibly "destroy, ruin."[121] However, the myth does not engage in any deeper consideration of the Underworld's character; it lacks the essential cosmological content present in Sumerian/Akkadian thought. Thus, it seems that the conceptual expression "city," as applied to the realm of the dead in Ugarit, is rather a mechanical and superficial adoption of the Mesopotamian tradition.

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[115] The deities Reshep and Horon also, in some ways, participated as the Netherworld principalities; they resided in a fortified city or a citadel within the city. Ibid., 350.

[116] Ibid., 228–29.

[117] Some of the Canaanite MBA cemeteries are so large that they resemble cities of their own, albeit populated with dead denizens. It is natural that such a landscape forces particular associations, accompanied by quite particular imagery. Greenberg, *Bronze Age Levant*, 254–59.

[118] See Astour, *Nether World and Its Denizens*, 229.

[119] "Lift the mount on your hands, the elevation upon your palms, and descend to the depth of the earth, be of those who descend into earth. There now, be off on your way into his city Pit, low the throne that he sits on, filth the land of his inheritance." ANET, 135; Wyatt translates the city's name "Muddy." Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 113.

[120] "The gods depart, tarry not. There, they are off on their way unto Godly Mot, into his city Hamriya, down to the throne that he sits on his filthy land of inheritance." Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 138. Gibson translates the city's name "Miry". Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends*, 70.

[121] "From his pit Aqhat beholds, he sees the 'heart' of darkness; yea, a giant serpent is at the gate(s), a dog at its right side; . . . and (at) [its] back there looms a to[wer]" (CTA 19:11-14, 17). Margalit, *Death and Dying*, 249.

The Legend of Aqhat

Apart from *The Baal and Mot* poem, *The Legend of Aqhat* is the only other text that treats the drama of death in a broader, even more reflective way. Due to some not-so-clear reasons, Aqhat, the hero of this mythical legend, loses his life. On his way to the Netherworld he enters the city of Mot, and its description is given as an eyewitness account. The content of this brief narration is comparable to the kingdom of Ereshkigal described in *The Descent of Ishtar to the Netherworld*. All major details related to the infernal abode already familiar from Mesopotamian tradition, are there: the gate, the tower, and the implied wall. The only addition springing from the local cognitive content are the chthonic symbols related to Mot and his minions, such as the snake and the dog[122] guarding each side of the gate. However, the larger ideological/cosmological context that is so acutely present in the Sumerian/Akkadian myth is missing; there is no indication that Mot's dominion is understood as a mirror image of heaven in a structurally balanced universe. Actually, El and Baal live on the Cosmic Mountain in the tents/palaces, not in the cities.

The Myth of Shapsh and the Mare

This short ritual text is weaved around the spell against the snakebite and includes an appeal to several deities in search of a cure. In the process of the search for healing, the dyads of deities are entreated for help, and in several cases, their residing cities are mentioned. So, Dagon is related to Tuttul, Anat and Athtart to Inbub, and Yarih to Larugat, among the others. However, the residence of Reshef (Rashaph), the Ugaritic equivalent of Mesopotamian Nergal, is referred to as Bibati (*KTU* 1:100:31). This name is derived from the Akkadian *babtu*, "district," which is

[122] Cerberus, the guardian of the entrance into the Underworld in later classical tradition. Ibid., 250.

an area of *Hamriya*, the Underworld city.[123] Likewise, Horon, another chthonic deity in charge of the incantations, is invoked, and his residence is addressed as "the fortress," which is again in the Underworld.[124] In turn, Horon goes to the "eastern" or "primeval" city and, while looking toward the city of Arsh, initiates the cure (*KTU* 1.100:58–70).[125]

As is the case with all other writings from Ugarit, this text is terse and laconic, assuming that the reader is thoroughly familiar with and informed in regard to the meaning of the various traditions implied in it. Much of this myth, unfortunately, escapes our understanding and consequently lures us to engage in speculation. What is clear, though, is that chthonic deities reside in the fortified cities in districts located in the Netherworld. Interestingly, the overall role of the city is perceived as quite positive, judging by the end of the ritual.

The City in Phoenician Literature: Philo of Byblos

According to tradition, Philo was born in the first half of the first century AD, around the time of Nero's rule. It seems that he was a well-educated and prolific writer. Among his many works, he translated eight books of Sanchuniathon's Phoenician history from the Phoenician dialect into Greek.[126]

In one of the preserved excerpts, Philo gives an outline of Phoenician cosmology, which starts with a description of the preexisting primordial cosmic chaos. Deities come spontaneously into being through *emersio*, which is also the case with some of the living things and the heavenly bodies. The creation through *formatio* does not come into the purview of the account;

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[123] Margalit, *Ugaritic Poem of AQHT*, 350.

[124] Ibid.

[125] Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 384–85.

[126] According to Philo, Sanchuniathon was a man from a distant past who supposedly lived before the Trojan era and was well versed in even older traditions. The excerpts of Philo's work are preserved in Eusebius *Praeparatio evangelica*. See Harold W. Attridge and Robert A. Jr. Oden, *Philo of Byblos: The Phoenician History* (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 1981), 28–71.

so, the animals sprout out after the appearance of the other rudiments necessary for life. On the other hand, humans are born as the progeny of the primeval elements. Likewise, the settling of Tyre and Byblos, the principal Phoenician cities, was attributed to one of the early men (*PE* 1.10.10, 15). Some other men were credited with the invention of architecture and building technics (*PE* 1.10.11–12). All these people were later deified, and consequently, their successive generations were addressed as gods. Thus, the invention of the city wall and the founding of the first city, Byblos, are assigned to Khronos (*PE* 1.10.20).

Philo's description of the Phoenician religion is an eclectic and quite late amalgamation of the elements that come from Babylonian, Egyptian, Syro-Palestinian, and Greek traditions.[127] Essentially, he implies that the cult of the divinized ancestors, so prevalent among the Syro-Palestinians, was behind the origin of the gods. The divine men who introduced the rudiments of civilization and society are reminiscent of the Babylonian antediluvian *apkallus* and postdiluvian *ummanus*. At the same time, the spontaneous emergence of deities from the primordial elements reverberates well with the Egyptian cosmogonies, while the demythologizing and anti-theological attitudes echo pre-classical and classical Greek skepticism and scientism.[128] What remains, when all the eclectic accretion is removed, represents the Phoenician (Canaanite) lore, which in its present shape has but a precious little to say about the city. However, in some crucial points, such as the role of the royal ancestors in the origin of cities, Philo resonates well with the early IA Tyrian concepts that differ a lot from Ugarit.[129]

[127] Erik van Dongen, "The 'Kingship in Heaven'-Theme of the Hesiodic Theogony: Origin, Function, Composition," *GRBS*, no. 51 (2011): 183.

[128] Clifford, *Creation Accounts*, 127–33.

[129] Guy Darshan, "Ruaḥ 'Elohim in Genesis 1:2 in Light of Phoenician Cosmogonies: A Tradition's History," *JNSL* 45, no. 2 (2019): 51–56.

Conclusion

This chapter proposes to analyze selected Canaanite literature and its content related to the city. Its primary focus is on mythopoetic and epic writings from Ugarit. The assessment of these texts demonstrates that the city was not prominent in the Southern Levantine/Canaanite theology and/or ideology.

Out of three major bodies of literature that are taken as sources on Canaanite ideology and theology, only two can be taken as such, which are the texts from Ugarit and the fragments of Philo. The texts from Ugarit cover a specific time period at the end of MBA and the beginning of LBA. The fragments of Philo purport to cover a much longer time span, but at best properly correspond to the IA II period to the 1st century AD and espouse ideas different from those of Ugarit.

The Ugaritic literature hints that deities reside in the various well-known cities in Canaan and Syria. However, at times deities live in tents, which are their temples, but also in a citadel on the Cosmic Mountain. The temple is the primordial residence of the deities and symbolizes their autonomous rule in the assigned realms. Likewise, the fortification is set within the context of royal ideology, thereby presenting the earthly kingship as the heavenly replica and the protector of equilibrium and order on earth. The Netherworld, the domain of Mot, is a city with the necessary installations and citadels for the other chthonic deities.

The fragments of Philo point to men as the founders of the cities of Phoenicia. The ensuing civilization and inventiveness are the result of their wisdom and endeavor. These ancestors were, in time declared divine and worshiped as such.

Despite being the place where the first large and lasting settlements appeared and its relative importance as a cultural, religious, economic, and administrative hub, it does not seem

that the city gained any momentum to crystalize as a concept in any substantive way in Ugarit and Canaan, respectively. The cosmological notes are rare and hard to discern at all in the available mythological and epic texts; at any rate, the city does not appear as a subject of cosmological speculations whatsoever. Thus, the relative spiritual significance of any city is mostly derived from hosting the temple of a particular deity. Although city is not equated as the model of an ideal earthly or heavenly social structure, paradoxically, the idea of the afterlife in the domain of Mot is imagined as city, most likely due to Mesopotamian influences.

When everything is considered, the city is not prominent in Canaanite/Ugaritic religious thought. In light of the early appearance of settled life and the long history of urbanization in Canaan, this is quite surprising. Only the IA I/IA II Tyre, with her synthetic city-oriented worship, constitutes an exception; however, due to the lack of written sources, the underlying concepts remain enigmatic.

Since the earliest layers of the Book of Genesis are believed to have been recorded in the 10^{th} century BC, many scholars believe that the ideas in the biblical protology reflect the contemporaneous ideological world of Ugarit and Phoenicia. By extension, this should also be true as far as the city is concerned. In other words, the biblical protology should reflect low or no interest in the city.

Chapter 5: The City in Egyptian Literature

Egypt was the closest neighbor of Israel and Juda at their southern border and, as such, considered one of the primary sources of religious and cultural influence on these kingdoms. The purpose of this chapter is, therefore, to do a limited literary analysis of selected Egyptian writings that reflect major ideas related to the city, specifically the mythological writings. The primary focus will be on the assessment of various theological and ideological points that illuminate the relationship between the city and the gods, kingship, the temple, and man in cosmogony, cosmology, and, consequently, eschatology in these texts. In the process, some preliminary observations regarding the absence and/or presence of autochthone concepts and possible allochthone influences will be noted. The intention of this chapter is to prepare the comparative points that would be contrasted with the biblical protology.

The City in Egypt

Egypt is an appellative that stands for several different concepts, such as the geographical region in Northeast Africa, a civilization that sprouted and thrived in the Nile Valley, or a kingdom that appeared about 3100 BC and lasted as an independent political entity until 650 BC. Egypt proper was the area on both sides of the Nile from its delta in the north to the First Cataracts at Aswan in the south. The physical extent of Egypt varied throughout history as its political and cultural boundaries kept stretching and contracting. It also included various indigenous local cultures[1] and traditions that amalgamated over time,[2] thereby creating what is designated as Ancient Egypt.[3] So, urban development in Egypt was largely endemic.

[1] Ancient Egypt was often referred to as the Two Lands, since it consisted of two geographically distinctive parts, the Upper (southern) and the Lower (northern) regions. Originally, during the Predynastic period, these two areas stood apart with the oldest and most prominent agricultural/herding societies appearing in the north (Fayum, Merimda, and el-Omari cultures, 5000–4300 BC). However, the southern developments, such as Badarian (4400–4000 BC) and its successor Naqada (particularly Naqada III, 3300–2900 BC), became dominant and eventually replaced and/or assimilated the population of Lower Egypt. See Christiana Kohler, "Lower Egypt Predynastic," ed. Peter N. Peregrine and Melvin Ember, *Encyclopedia of Prehistory* (New York, NY: Springer, 2012).

The Origin of Cities in Egypt

The Nile River Valley witnessed the first urban developments in Africa that were quite pronounced during the Predynastic era.[4] Thus, the Nakada IIC–D period was marked by (a) the spread of very particular cultural traits in the area of Upper Egypt and (b) the prominence of several large settlements that distinguished themselves as urban centers in a primarily agrarian environment.[5] Egypt originally consisted of several independent units called *nomes*, or counties, comprised of various numbers of settlements, some towns but primarily villages.[6] The merger of the nomes led to the creation of a few small agrarian chiefdoms that further amalgamated and quickly became quite powerful and competing kingdoms.[7]

The relatively quick and brutal unification of Upper and Lower Egypt under the hand of the rulers of either Hierancopolis or Abydos happened during the Nakada III period.[8] The merger of the land did not come through the establishment of a confederation of several city-states and their eventual amalgamation, as was the case in Sumer, but through the dominance of one tribal federation that expanded and, in the process, subdued its rivals. Consequently, Egypt very early

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[2] However, the impact of the north on the culture and economy of the whole land was deep and lasting. John Romer, *A History of Ancient Egypt: From the First Farmers to the Great Pyramid* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2013), chap. 4. Kindle.

[3] Stephen H. Savage, "Upper Egyptian Predynastic: Nagada Culture," ed. Peter N. Peregrine and Melvin Ember, *Encyclopedia of Prehistory* (New York, NY: Springer, 2012).

[4] Olof Pedersen et al., "Cities and Urban Landscapes in the Ancient Near East and Egypt with Special Focus on the City of Babylon," in *The Urban Mind: Cultural and Environmental Dynamics*, ed. Paul J. J. Sinclair et al. (Uppsala, S: Uppsala Universitet, 2010), 123.

[5] E. Christiana Köhler, "Theories of State Formation," in *Egyptian Archaeology*, ed. Willeke Wendrich (Chichester, UK ; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 44–47.

[6] The proto-nomes were originally supra-village polities, the chiefdoms that consisted of aggregations of villages created in response to various challenges, primarily in response to clan and tribe conflicts. More complex political units that led to statehood were aggregations of several proto-nomes that amalgamated around eight centers, of which in time only three most powerful remained: Abydos, Naqada, and Hierankonpolis, absorbing the others in the process. See Branislav Anđelković, "Political Organization of Egypt in the Predynastic Period," in *Before the Pyramids: The Origins of Egyptian Civilization*, ed. Emily Teeter (Chicago, IL: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2011), 28.

[7] Toby A. H. Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt* (London, GB: Routledge, 1999), 41.

[8] Ibid., 42–43.

became a territorial/ethnic[9] and stable state that, due to its naturally protected borders, remained complete and preserved its culture and structure for the next two and a half millennia.

Thus, unlike Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean world, which knew city-states, parochial towns, and villages, Egypt knew only the last two.[10] Accordingly, irrespective of some urban endeavors and developments during the New Kingdom era, Egypt remained basically an agrarian village society throughout her history[11] and unique in comparison with the ANE world.

Defining City within Its Egyptian Context

The proper term for city in Egyptian is still not possible to determine with any certainty, although many words for various types of settlement are catalogued.[12] Moreover, for various practical reasons, it is very difficult to determine the true nature of pre-New Kingdom Egyptian urbanism, prompting some to wrongly conclude that it was a civilization without cities.[13] But the evidence is growing that "the Egyptians forged a form of dispersed urbanism characterized by smaller, more specialized urban settlements."[14] Despite the aforementioned issues, the recent studies point out that there is a set of very particular key elements that define and connect the major types of settlements that can be categorized as cities or towns, in contrast to villages.[15]

Probably the most significant typology is the division between the "Center," which was

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[9] Ibid., 48–49.

[10] Donald B. Redford, "The Ancient Egyptian 'City': Figment or Reality?," in *Aspects of Urbanism in Antiquity: From Mesopotamia to Crete*, ed. Walter Aufrecht, Neil A. Mirau, and Stephen W. Gauley (Sheffield, GB: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 210.

[11] Ibid., 220. Also, see Mark Lehner, "Villages and the Old Kingdom," in *Egyptian Archaeology*, ed. Willeke Wendrich (Chichester, UK ; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 98.

[12] Nadine Moeller, *The Archaeology of Urbanism in Ancient Egypt: From the Predynastic Period to the End of the Middle Kingdom* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 12, 14; Redford, 210–12.

[13] Mieroop, *Ancient Mesopotamian City*, 10.

[14] See Michael E. Smith, "Ancient Cities," ed. E. Ray Hutchison, *Encyclopedia of Urban Studies* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2009), 25.

[15] See Moeller, *Archaeology of Urbanism*, 15–26.

situated in the capital of the state, and the "Periphery" comprised of the "townships or 'Nomes', each with its own capital."[16] This division is of great importance within the framework of the royal ideology and theory of the state.

On the other hand, the ground plans of some of the New Kingdom cities correspond to the ancient pictograph standing for the urban settlement (*niwt*), which is a symbolical presentation of the four city-quarters intersected with processional ways within a walled enclosure. Similarly to the Syrian cities, this design balances the royal palace, usually in the center, with its access to each quarter containing one of the four major temples placed at the cardinal points.[17] However, apart from this architectural cosmological symbolism, the known Egyptian literature is almost bare of any substantial reflection and speculation related to the city.

Usually, the Egyptian cities consisted of small administrative, cultic, and economic centers that incorporated large swaths of farming and grazing land with clustered villages and towns within their "limits."[18] Memphis, the state capital of the First Dynasty, illustrates this paradigm. The early "city" was rather an urban zone consisting of a series of towns and other settlements that stretched for about twenty miles along the Nile.[19] Accordingly, the ideal life of both the nobility and the peasants was a life of farming that continued into the afterlife.

The City and Religion in Egypt

Egyptian religion is very complex, has many sources, and is a multilayered system in which pre-Literate animism, fetishism, and totemism coexist with very sophisticated theological reflection. Beliefs and concepts evolved continually, reassigning attributes and functions to

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[16] Redford, *Ancient Egyptian 'City'*, 214–15.

[17] After Carolyn Routledge, "Temple as the Center in Ancient Egyptian Urbanism," in *Aspects of Urbanism in Antiquity: From Mesopotamia to Crete*, ed. Walter Aufrecht, Neil A. Mirau, and Stephen W. Gauley (Sheffield, GB: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 227–28.

[18] Redford, *Ancient Egyptian 'City'*, 212–13.

[19] See Moeller, *Archaeology of Urbanism*, 158–64.

various gods and finally fusing deities into monadic godheads. The same was true of the mythology, which was unique to each cultic center, making it hard to talk about a pantheon since there were many of them. Thus, it would be best to follow the typology suggested by Lemming that takes into consideration the fusion of various local deities into four distinctive groups of the primary national gods: the great god (Re, Atum), the great goddess (Hathor), the dying god (Re, Osiris), and the trickster gods (Seth and Thoth).[20]

Depending on the locales of the source traditions, two groups of the deities were prominent, which were the Heliopolitan Ennead and the Hermopolitan Ogdoad, with their second tiers of supporting deities. All of these gods represented deified elements and powers of nature present as potentialities in the primeval chaos.

Egyptian Cosmology

The creation of the universe is ascribed to the primordial preexisting Monad that represented potentiality and, through self-generation, manifested itself. This One self-developed into the Many, thus ushering into manifest existence the other rudiments and powers that comprise nature and the world, such as the Ennead or the Ogdoad.[21] Through the interplay of these elementary divinities, all the other constituents of the cosmos came into existence.[22]

The Egyptians viewed the universe as consisting of three distinctive realms: heaven, air, and earth. The flat earth, a "sphere of air and light," is encircled with mountains and floats in the "limitless ocean of dark and motionless" Primeval Waters.[23] The Underworld was, unlike the rest

[20] David Leeming, *Jealous Gods and Chosen People: The Mythology of the Middle East* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004), 62–66.

[21] According to the theologies of Heliopolis or Hermopolis, respectively.

[22] James P. Allen, *Genesis in Egypt: The Philosophy of Ancient Egyptian Creation Account* (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1998), 57–61.

[23] Ibid., 3–4.

of the ANE world, ambiguously envisioned both as a horizontal vault inside the sky[24] consisting of the *Duat* and its parts, yet somehow being underground.[25] The sun circles through the day sky and then, overnight, sails through the Duat to be reborn in the morning. Thus, a three-part cosmos was a scene of human experience and destiny marked by constant cycling.

The City is mostly absent from the cosmological reflection, and whatever can be gleaned from various sources is quite brief and ambiguous. Thus, the late *Theban Creation Myth* refers to Thebes as the preexisting location where the first "hillock" appeared from the primordial waters.[26] This cosmological image parallels the allegorical mythemes encountered in Mesopotamia, but this time describing the inundations of the Nile River and the life-giving mud mound that appears as the flood waters recede.[27] However, this notion does not go further than a theological legitimization of the particular location, just as was the case with many other cities,[28] since the primal hill was directly associated with Atum.[29]

The same can be said about anthropogony; there are a few passages that mention the creation of man, which seem to be accidental.[30] According to the two versions of the creation of humans, they either come from the tears of Atum[31] or are molded out of clay by Khnum.[32]

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[24] Jeremy Naydler, *Temple of the Cosmos: The Ancient Egyptian Experience of the Sacred* (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 1996), chap. 3. Kindle.

[25] Allen, *Genesis in Egypt*, 3–4.

[26] "Thebes is normal beyond every (other) city. The water and land were in her from the first times. (Then) (ii 11) sand came to delimit the fields and to create her ground on the hillock; (thus) earth came into being." ANET, 8.

[27] Clifford, *Creation Accounts*, 105–6.

[28] As the New Kingdom's capital, Thebes competed with the other worship centers for prominence. The Theban creation account is the adaptation of the already existing concepts that were already applied to the other cities, i.e. Memphis.

[29] Robert T. R. Clark, *Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt*, rep. ed. (London, GB: Thames & Hudson, 1999), 37–39.

[30] Leeming, *Jealous Gods*, 72.

[31] "The human beings who came forth from my eye..." CT, Spell 80. Raymond O. Faulkner, *Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts: Spells 1-354*, vol. 1, 3 vols. (Warminster, GB: Aris & Phillips, 1974). 84.

The City and Gods in Egypt

Every cultic center usually hosted the temple of one principal deity.[33] As a result, the cities became very early associated with the temples of particular deities. However, the notion of the lordship of a deity over a city as his or her demesne is absent from Egyptian thought.

The City and the Temple in Egypt

Temples were dominant features of the Egyptian cities. The symbiosis between the city and the temple started very early; in a similar manner as in Sumer, the first settlement aggregated around the shrines, and in time, this mutualism found its expression in the concept known as the "temple town."[34] Thus, the city in all its aspects was subservient and conformed to the function and need of the temple. On the other hand, the temples were in many cases self-standing, such as the solar temples, the funeral temples that were parts of the mortuary complexes, or the portable boat shrines, thus external and independent from the urban nodes. This practice resembles the Syrian-Anatolian-Levantine typology and stands in contrast to Mesopotamian traditions.

The City and Kingship in Egypt

The Pharaoh was both human and divine, essentially an avatar representing gods on earth and the mediator between human and divine. The king's authority sprouted from his divinity and association with the highest gods of Egypt, both in his life (Horus) and death (Osiris). Other views, such as those expressed in solar theology, identified him as the son of the first king, Re.

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[32] Fragment in CT Spell 996; Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, vol. III: The Late Period (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010), 111–113. Also, see a thin argument in Leeming, *Jealous Gods*, 72.

[33] The first shrines were simple mud-brick buildings that contained the symbols of the gods, just as in Sumer. In time, particularly during the New Kingdom period, the temples became elaborate and magnificent stone palaces that hosted anthropomorphic and theriomorphic statues of gods and, even, their inanimate representations. There, the armies of various priests and priestly orders performed daily rituals of washing, clothing, and feeding the gods, just as in the rest of the ANE world. Emily Teeter, *Religion and Ritual in Ancient Egypt* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 39–51.

[34] Routledge, *Temple as the Center*, 221.

His duty, just as in the rest of the ANE world, was to maintain order and balance in the universe and the cosmos, so they could function without any disturbance or interruption, and to dominate and further natural processes.[35] Likewise, as the high priest, the Pharaoh was the protector of the cult, whose task was to maintain the temples and funerary complexes while ensuring that divine displeasure and its terrible consequences would not happen.[36]

The Pharaoh was the absolute ruler[37] and owner of the whole of Egypt, whose power was rivaled only by the big temples. The economy was, likewise, in the king's hands, and a part of the state's policies was the establishment of farming, storage, production, and trade cities. For various reasons and personal preferences, the state capitals were at times moved to different cities or built at some new locations and later abandoned, such as Amarna. In contrast to Mesopotamia, it was the rulers that were the creators of the Egyptian civilization, not the cities.[38]

Deification of the King

The Pharaoh was divine from the moment of birth. Accordingly, the legitimation through the rite of symbolic accession in heaven (Ugarit) or through the sacred marriage (Sumer) was neither utilized nor needed. However, the mechanisms behind the king's deification are still not understood.[39]

The City in Egyptian Literature

The Egyptian literature is very rich, both in sheer number of preserved texts, as well as in

[35] Frankfort, *Kingship and the God*, 58.

[36] After Janet Richards, "Kingship and Legitimation," in *Egyptian Archaeology*, ed. Willeke Wendrich (Chichester, UK ; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 56.

[37] The king was supported by the assemblies of noblemen appointed by the monarch, who served as the administrators of towns and/or as judges. There were both local and regional assemblies, as well as a grand assembly under the Pharaoh vizier himself. After Martin III and Snell, *Democracy and Freedom*, 400–401.

[38] After Hammond, *City in the Ancient World*, 65–76.

[39] See Jonathan Winnerman, "Divine Kingship and the Royal Ka," in *Ancient Egyptian Society*, ed. Danielle Candelora, Nadia Ben-Marzouk, and Kathlyn M. Cooney (Abingdon, GB; New York, NY: Routledge, 2022), 40–48.

the variety of genres,[40] such as autobiographies, instructions, tales, and poetry.[41] There is also cult-related material consisting of prayers, hymns, and prophecies. However, the largest literary corpus belongs to the funerary writings that are comprised of spells, rituals, and guides interspersed with cosmology and myth related passages.

Myth

Egyptian musings about creation preserve the ancient traditions and are centered on the cultic needs and the annual inundation of the Nile. Thus, due to their peculiar interests and their intense orientation to the afterlife, Egyptian myths are fragmentary, diffused in various mortuary inscriptions that need to be carefully reassembled and reconstructed.[42] Moreover, there were many gods in many cultic centers with as many cosmogonies. The three principal ones, from which all others are derived, are related to the shrines of Ra (Atum) in Heliopolis, Toth in Hermopolis, and Ptah in Memphis. The main sources for the Heliopolitan cosmology are the Old Kingdom *Pyramid Texts,* the Hermoploitan Middle Kingdom *Coffin Texts,* and the Memphite Shabaka Stone inscription, which is considered a Late Period copy of a New Kingdom text.[43]

Middle Kingdom (2134–1690 BC)

The Heliopolitan Creation Myth (The Ennead of Heliopolis)

In the Heliopolitan creation myth, Atum is initially a passive potentiality that is contained in the chaos of the primordial ocean, which itself is a deity, where god comes as the manifest being through self-generation. One of the passages contains a familiar idea: Atum says, "I was

[40] Ancient Egyptian is an extinct language that belonged to the family of Afro-Asiatic languages. It shares affinities with Berber and Semitic languages. After Edward Lipinski, "From Semitic to Afro-Asiatic," in *From Semitic to Afro-Asiatic*, ed. Keith Allan (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 259–282.

[41] Miriam Lichtheim, ed. *Ancient Egyptian Literature, vol. I: The Old and Middle Kingdoms*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006, 3–12.

[42] NERT, 4.

[43] Joshua J. Bodine, "The Shabaka Stone: An Introduction," *SA* 7, no. 1 (April 2009): 5–6.

alone with Nu... I could find no place on which to stand or sit, when On (Heliopolis) had not yet been founded that I might dwell in it."[44] So, the relative importance of the city as the residence of a god is clearly stated.

As the myth continues, we learn that Atum emerges from the watery chaos, which is represented as the snake, through the battle and defines himself as the "Primordial Hill" or "Mound." As the serpent is killed, the world tree sprouts from the snake's fold, and the First Land arises from the abyss. The ensuing theogony happens in the city Heliopolis, where Atum produces air/space and moisture/fertility, deities who make the other gods necessary for the creation of the manifest cosmos, and humans.[45] Similarly to the Mesopotamian myths, the city's preexistence is granted, and it becomes the center of the cosmic creation; however, the myth is void of any notion of the city's actual place and role in the divine economy. So, On (Heliopolis) does not appear more than a location, a mere background for Atum's activity.

New Kingdom (1549–1069 BC)

Akhenaten's Hymn to Aten

The hymn was composed by Akhenaten (1365–1348 BC) in a form resembling the already established patterns and vocabulary of the older hymnic creations.[46] It is dedicated to Aten, the god associated with and in whom the solar deities Re, Horakhty, and Atum merged.[47] Appropriately, it exalts Aten as the creator, for he "made the earth according to" his desire and, also "millions of forms" from himself, including "cities and towns, fields, roads and the river."[48]

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[44] CT, Spell 80.

[45] "Atum is the one who came into being ithyphallic in Heliopolis. He put his penis in his fist so that he might make orgasm with it, and the two twins were born, Shu and Tefnut" (Recitation 527). James P. Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 2nd ed. (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2015), 168.

[46] NERT, 16.

[47] Teeter, *Religion and Ritual*, 186–88.

[48] NERT, 18–19.

Therefore, the divine is the source of everything, first and foremost the society, which is embodied in and symbolized by the cities and towns. While the things listed belong to the wider context of a meaningful and productive world, thereby paralleling the same sentiments present in the Mesopotamian hymnic and mythopoeic creations, the city does not seem to be envisioned beyond any other implemental element of the properly ordered cosmos.

Late Period (653–332 BC)

Theology of Memphis

Talking about Ptah, Shabaka Text says that he "had formed the god… made cities… founded nomes... put the gods in their shrines... established their offerings."[49] Here, though taking part in the sequence of creation, the city appears within the context of the temple and worship. Indeed, the city was the cult center of a deity, but, due to its administrative function within the distributive economy of a nome, it was a mere source of support and protection for the shrine. Anyway, its cosmological role and importance seem to be established in the Memphite theology; however, it is tokenish at best since the elaboration expected elsewhere in the text is nonexistent. So, it is there only to legitimize Memphis as the sacred city and the state capital.

The City in Egyptian Eschatology

The mind of the Egyptian was set completely on the afterlife, since this life was considered transitory. However, the ideas on what the hereafter looked like and how to get there differed greatly; moreover, the views kept evolving and merging over time.[50] Death was inevitable; even the gods could die, and the second death, which meant total annihilation, was a

[49] ANET, 5.

[50] A. Jeffrey Spencer, *Death in Ancient Egypt*, rep. ed. (Harmondsworth, GB; New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1983), 148–49.

possibility. But, the general concepts were more positive than in Mesopotamia and the Levant,[51] since the mostly serene cycles of Nile inundation with regular changes of life and death in nature encouraged somewhat brighter cosmological and eschatological analogies.

There are many writings that vividly describe the Duat (the Netherworld) and offer guidance through its many challenges. The primary texts come from the major historical periods and are represented in three large collections: *The Pyramid Texts*,[52] *The Coffin Texts*,[53] and *The Book of the Dead*.[54] As traditions kept developing, additional writings were added, such as *The Amduat*, *The Book of the Day*, *The Book of the Night*, *The Book of the Caves*, to name some.

The Duat was seen as a "more permanent life in a place that was an enhanced Egypt … which could be either subterranean and a mirror image of Egypt, or celestial… domain of the god Osiris… Here the deceased... could live eternally at one with the gods."[55] *The Book of Dead* describes it as having seven gates on the way to Osiris, which lead through several regions or districts that resemble a "city divided into sectors, each only accessible through one gate."[56] Indeed, the Paradise possessed all physical and geographical features, including many cities

[51] The celestial destiny belonged to the kings, the terrestrial/chronic farming for the rest of the populace.

[52] PT is the assemblage of a larger corpus of Old Kingdom spells and ritual texts written primarily on the inner chamber walls of the pyramids. In general, the aim of the PT was to assist the king in his celestial journey and reception among the deities. After Erik Hornung, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Afterlife*, trans. David Lorton (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), 1–6.

[53] CT is a collection of Middle Kingdom funerary spells written on the tomb walls and on various different objects. These writings initially announced the access to the afterlife to the officials and priests and talked about the reunion with the deceased loved ones. Their purpose was to guide the dead mostly through the sky into the celestial regions. Ibid., 7–12.

[54] BD consists of the mortuary spells mostly written on papyrus during the New Kingdom. It is a guide for all dead on their journey through dangers and judgement to a paradise called the Fields of Offerings or the Fields of Reeds. Ibid., 13–22.

[55] Salima Ikram, *Death and Burial in Ancient Egypt* (Cairo, EG: The American University in Cairo Press, 2015), 23. E. A. Wallis Budge and John Romer, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead* (New York: Penguin, 2008), intro., Kindle.

[56] Garry J. Shaw, *The Egyptian Myths: A Guide to the Ancient Gods and Legends* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2014), chap. 4. Kindle. The analogy can be traced to some Old Kingdom inscriptions that call a cemetery a "town" or "city" and there are indices that the dead are envisioned to belong to a community. See Mark Smith, *Following Osiris: Perspectives on the Osirian Afterlife from Four Millennia* (Oxford, GB: Oxford University Press, 2017), 55.

through which the deceased journeyed on the quest to the Islands of Osiris.[57] It is interesting that some writings refer to the Netherworld as *Rosetau*, a term used both for the heavens and the necropolis, which in turn is also referred to as a town or a city.[58] Moreover, one of the PT spells calls the Duat "Great City" or "Town," and the gate into it the "Swallower of all."[59] Still, the longing and hope of the Egyptian was to somehow return to the land of Egypt, not a city.

Conclusion

This chapter proposes to analyze selected Egyptian literature and its content related to the city. In the process, it demonstrated that the city was not very prominent or that its presence in Egyptian theology and/or ideology was minimal.

Thus, the city is mentioned in the Heliopolitan and Theban creation myths, as well as the Memphite Theology, as the primordial place established on the Cosmic Mound. The creation of the gods and everything else happens in the city; furthermore, the very first creation act of the Great God is to create cities throughout the land of Egypt.

However, considering the sheer amount of Egyptian literature, the city is barely mentioned in any meaningful way in the texts relevant to cosmology. Even when it appears, the expressions are laconic, and the context and intertextuality lack any elaboration that would illuminate its true role and place. Thus, the references to the city leave the impression that they are not more than a tool of legitimation of particular locations that were considered great shrines of some deities. Even the eschatological views, which were extremely peculiar and so different from anything else in the ANE world, were land-oriented and not city-oriented. These elements are quite opposite to the Mesopotamian view of city, where it was assigned the axial position in

[57] Budge and Romer, *Book of the Dead*, intro., Kindle.

[58] There are indications that the dead are envisioned to belong to a community. See Mark Smith, *Following Osiris: Perspectives on the Osirian Afterlife from Four Millennia* (Oxford, GB: Oxford University Press, 2017), 55.

[59] "Ho, Pepi Neferkare! You have been arrayed as a god, your face that of a jackal—as Osiris, the ba in Nedit, the Controlling Power in Great Town" (Recitation 690). PT, 288.

relation to heaven and earth and where it was the epitome for the destiny of the men and gods in this and the life to come.

Some scholars believe that the ideas in the biblical protology reflect the salient theological points present in Egyptian cosmology. By extension, this should also be true as far as the city is concerned. In other words, the biblical protology should reflect minimal or no interest in the city.

Chapter 6: The City in the Biblical Protology

The purpose of this chapter is to explore ideas on the city in the biblical protology (creation), specifically, the Primeval History in Genesis 1–11. Particular attention will be paid to the exegesis and exposition of distinctive elements of cosmology, cosmogony, and anthropogony as they relate to the city in Genesis 1–2, Genesis 4–7, and Genesis 10–11. These elements will be compared to Mesopotamian, Syrian, Anatolian, Canaanite, and Egyptian concepts and beliefs. The intention of this chapter is to present evidence that the city is (a) one of the foundational themes in the biblical protology and that (b) the concept of the city in the biblical protology is vastly different from the concepts in the ANE world. This will provide the insight into the salient protological conceptions of the city that will be covered in Chapter 8's discussion of the city in biblical eschatology.

The City in Israel

Urban developments in Israel belong to the IA Canaan/Southern Levant typology, and, as Frick amply attests, OT presents an elaborate picture of the city during that and the following periods.[1] Likewise, Ollenburger demonstrates the particularities of a mature theology that puts God and the Davidic dynasty within well-defined constraints of authority and responsibility built around Yahweh's kingship in Jerusalem.[2] Roberts independently dates the origin of the Zion tradition very early to the Davidic-Solomonic era.[3] Thus, Israel was an urban society that possessed an elaborate theology and/or ideology of the city as one of its core tenets.

The City in the Biblical Protology (Genesis 1–11)

Both the ANE writings and the Bible place the origin of the city within the creation

[1] Frick, *City in Ancient Israel*, passim.

[2] Ollenburger, *Zion*, passim.

[3] Jimmy Roberts, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East: Collected Essays* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 343–46.

accounts. However, the biblical perspective, while reflecting many similarities with its ANE counterparts, is conspicuously different.[4] The early stages of the comparative research of Genesis and the ANE traditions were marked by their focus on the real and alleged conceptual and other resemblances. Consequently, the scholars paid close attention to the Babylonian cosmological ideas, primarily those expressed in *Enuma Elish*, *Atrahasis Epic*, and *Eridu Genesis*, which were then contrasted with Genesis 1–2.[5] There was also a smaller yet vocal number of the authors who saw some crucial parallels between the first verses of Genesis 1 and the Egyptian creation myths, particularly the Heliopolitan and the Memphite theologies.[6] The third view recognized the Egyptian ideas as pertinent to the essential creation (Gen. 1:1–3) and the Mesopotamian concepts as related to the orderly creation of the universe.[7] The fourth position is concerned with the Ugaritic/Canaanite resemblances observed in the poetic passages of the Prophets and the Writings sections of the Scripture.[8]

When it comes to the structure of the Primeval History, Rendsburg builds on Sasson's proposal[9] suggesting that it represents a "deliberately produced" textual unit consisting of ten

[4] See Bill T. Arnold's warning in "Old Testament Eschatology and the Rise of Apocalypticism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology*, ed. Jerry L. Walls (Oxford, GB; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), 31.

[5] I.e., Heidel, *Babylonian Genesis*, 82–140. Most notably, Hermann Gunkel, "The Influence of Babylonian Mythology upon the Biblical Creation Story," in *Creation in the Old Testament*, ed. Bernhard W. Anderson (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984), 25–52.

[6] John D. Currid, *Ancient Egypt and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1997), 53–73. Also, from the same author, *Against the Gods: The Polemical Theology of the Old Testament* (Crossway, 2013), 33–46.

[7] Carl F. Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 1: The Pentateuch (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989), 23. Wilfred G. Lambert, "A New Look at the Babylonian Background of Genesis," *JTS* XVI, no. 2 (1965): 287–300.

[8] Gibson, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, 202–219; Loren R. Fisher, "Creation at Ugarit and in the Old Testament," *VT* 15, no. 3 (1965): 313–324.

[9] Jack M. Sasson postulates that Genesis 1–11 can be roughly divided into two parts centered on and around two major Tables of Nations (Gen. 1–6:8 and Gen. 6:9–11:9) fitted in elaborated prologues and counterbalancing each other. "The 'Tower of Babel' as a Clue to the Redactional Structuring of the Primeval

stories clustered in two mirroring panels: (a) Creation, Adam (Gen. 1:1–6:8), and (b) The Flood, Noah (Gen. 6:9–11:26).[10] From the perspective of protology and eschatology, these two panels can be seen in terms of creation/de-creation/re-creation.[11] From the point of interest of this inquiry, the whole history is of great concern, with The Story of Cain (Gen. 4:2–24) and The Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1–9) demanding additional attention.

The City in Genesis 1–2

The debate concerning the author, the date, the sources, the nature, and the intended audience of Genesis is still ongoing and, thus, in flux. In any case, the orthography of the text, in its present state, sets the temporal boundary of the first supposed recording between the tenth century BC and the Persian period.[12] The morphology, on the other hand, suggests the mid-eighth century BC,[13] while the editorial emendations are not later than the mid-fifth century BC.[14] So, the core ideas and the basic structure of the text predate the Babylonian Exile.

However, some material in Genesis 1–11 clearly resonates with very ancient traditions that were already obsolete when set against the proposed timeframe.[15] Likewise, there are no

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History," in *The Bible World: Essays in Honor of Cyrus H. Gordon*, ed. Gary Rendsburg et al. (New York, NY: Ktav, 1980), 211–19.

[10] Gary A. Rendsburg, *The Redaction of Genesis* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1986), 22–25.

[11] Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Creation, Un-Creation, Re-Creation: A Discursive Commentary On Genesis 1-11* (London, GB; New York, NY: T & T Clark International, 2011), 1–53.

[12] After Francis I. Anderson and A. Dean Forbes, *Spelling in the Hebrew Bible* (Rome, IT: Biblical Institute Press, 1986), 312–313; also, Michael P. O'Connor, "Writing Systems, Native Speaker Analyses, and the Earliest Stages of Northwest Semitic Orthography," in *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. Carol L. Meyers and Michael P. O'Connor (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 439–65.

[13] Andersen and Forbes, *Spelling in the Hebrew Bible*, 66–70 and 309–28.

[14] See Bruce K. Waltke, "The Samaritan Pentateuch and the Text of the Old Testament," in *New Perspectives on the Old Testament*, ed. J. Barton Payne (Waco, TX: Word Incorporated, 1970), 227–35.

[15] "Genesis' knowledge of Mesopotamian ideas is too vague and diffuse to suggest that it had been acquired by a Jewish exile undergoing a crash course in Babylonian mythology at some scribal school. Though Genesis often addresses topics similar to those in Babylonian sources, the story line and the names are usually quite different. This suggests that, as far as Gen 1–11 is concerned, the point of contact between Israel and Babylon lies far back in the distant past, not in the sixth century B.C., and that these similarities arise from oral transmission, not

contiguous in time or space, thematically complete, and extensive ANE creation accounts, but short bits and pieces scattered in vast corpuses of mythopoetic narratives accreted through centuries and originating at various places. In contrast, the biblical record is comprehensive, coordinated, and of substantial length. Furthermore, the style and nature of the introductory chapters of Genesis purport to present a demythologized historical account[16] that sets the foundation for the biblical metanarrative. So, Primeval History is an exposition of what Israel believes and, arguably, a tacit narrative apologetics aimed at some prominently different views. Thence, Genesis 1 is the account of creation and a critique of the ANE cosmology, while Genesis 1–11, as a whole, is a critique of the religious and political concepts of the ANE world.

The City in Genesis 1:1–2: The Biblical Cosmogony

According to some scholarly views, the grammatical peculiarities of בראשית ברא אלהים (Gen 1:1) call for construing the first clause as "when God began to create," which leaves little room for creation *ex nihilo*. This rendering places the verse and the following text among the standard ANE cosmogonies with pantheistic and/or monistic inclinations. However, the arguments in favor of the traditional translation "in [the] beginning God created" abound, and an absolute state of nothingness with God outside of space and time cannot be excluded.[17]

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through Hebrews studying Mesopotamian literature... the overall structure of the material in Gen 1–11 finds its closest parallels in the Sumerian flood story and the Sumerian king list, and in the Atrahasis epic, all dated to 1600 B.C. or earlier." Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, xliv.

[16] Naturally, this view is not without challenges; see Alan Dickin, "Recovering Genesis One from Scientific and Societal Misunderstanding," *Christian Perspectives on Science and Technology* 2, New Series (2023): 30–32 and 55–57. Also, Foster R. McCurley, *Ancient Myths and Biblical Faith: Scriptural Transformations* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1983), 1–5.

[17] See Sarna's ingeniously succinct summary of the arguments, Nahum M. Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis* בראשית (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 2001), 5. For a detailed argument, see Bob Becking and Marjo C.A. Korpel, "To Create, to Separate or to Construct: An Alternative for a Recent Proposal as to the Interpretation of ברא in Gen 1:1–2:4a," *JHS* 10, no. August (2010), https://doi.org/10.5508/jhs.2010.v10.a3 (accessed May 20, 2023). For criticism of Walton's denial of *creatio ex nihilo* see E. Jerome Van Kuiken, "John Walton's Lost Worlds and God's Loosed Word: Implications for Inerrancy, Canon, and Creation," *JETS* 58, no. 4 (2015): 6687–89.

Moreover, the expression את השמים ואת הארץ in Genesis 1:1 is merism for "everything;" it forms inclusio with Genesis 2:1, which in Genesis 2:2–3 extends into the concluding theological statement regarding creation. This structural accentuation, together with עשה, which as a functional synonym of ברא appears as the dominant verb, makes creation *ex nihilo* quite plausible. Thus, God of the Bible is the sole source of *creatio prima*, the Creator or the Maker of everything. This separates the God of the Bible from the ANE monism and pantheistic polytheism and positions Him outside of the god-nature-man triangle of dependencies and influences.[18]

In both Sumerian and Akkadian myths, the preexisting primordial waters and the earth are deities from which all other gods and the elements of the universe originate. Theogony in Sumerian texts is marked with serenity, while in Akkadian myths it is immediately followed by a violent theomachy in which the new gods depose the old ones. In Sumerian myths, right after theogony, the primordial city appears as a divine estate. Then comes the temple as the residence of the primary divinity or a divine couple, who, through successive steps, create their divine retinue. The result of theogony is the divine society with its hierarchy and responsibilities, and the kingship with the heavenly council. Subsequently, cosmogony and anthropogony commence, and the cities of the gods involved in the respective processes are established. The sequence in Akkadian myths is similar, but cosmogony is the result of theomachy, after which a city with its temple is built for the victorious god, who then proceeds with the creation of humans.[19]

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[18] After John N. Oswalt, *The Bible among the Myths: Unique Revelation or Just Ancient Literature?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 47–62.

[19] Dalley compares three different creation accounts and concludes that "we cannot speak of 'the Mesopotamian view of creation' as a single, specific tradition, and this in turn shows the futility of claiming a direct connection between genesis as described in the Old Testament and any one Mesopotamian account of creation." Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia*, 278. Also, see Noel K. Weeks, "The Ambiguity of Biblical 'Background,'" *WTJ* 72, no. 2 (2010): 219–36.

Anthropogony happens in the divine primordial city, since humans are made to be slaves of the gods. Inevitably, men live in the cities to which they are predestined.

In Egypt, similarly to Mesopotamia, matter is preexistent, while creation begins and flows from the primordial temple-city. The emergence or self-evolution of the primary deity is accompanied by theomachy, as is the case in the Heliopolitan myth, then follows theogony and ultimately cosmogony. Still, even Ptah's "word creation" requires assistance from the other gods. Since the focus is on the creation of the foundational elements of the universe, anthropogony is absent and happens at some unspecified place and time by various gods and in different ways.

In the Bible, the first things God creates are "the heavens and the earth" or the whole universe (Gen. 1:1), which implies that (a) nothingness precedes creation and explicates that (b) God acts outside of the creation. This opposes the Mesopotamian idea of preexisting matter, usually represented as the animated and deified heaven and earth that become the parents of the gods. A similar motif is seen in the creation of the heavenly luminaries, which were also considered deities by the ANE world, yet God made (ויעש) them to serve (Gen. 1:14–18).

In Genesis 1, the cosmos is described as a lifeless, submerged earth in an environment dominated by emptiness, formlessness, and darkness (Gen. 1:2). While this type of environment is usually understood as the primordial chaos and the battlefield of the gods, the immediate context does not indicate that this situation is viewed as chaotic or a struggle.[20] On the contrary, this is the incipient stage in God's creative work. Even if this situation is taken as "chaos," then God created it with all of its elements (Gen. 1:21);[21] this is so unlike the Babylonian and

[20] David T. Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction: A Reappraisal of the Chaoskampf Theory in the Old Testament*, revised ed. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 143. Interestingly, Walton agrees with Tsumura, though on different grounds; see John H. Walton, "Creation in Genesis 1:1–2:3 and the Ancient Near East: Order out of Disorder after Chaoskampf," *CTJ* 43, no. 1 (April 2008): 62–63.

[21] Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 184–85.

Egyptian views that chaos is the original preexisting state of things, representing a tendency to inertia and a field of opportunities that leads to a struggle. But God neither emerges from chaos nor fights it; He, in serenity, introduces new elements in the nascent cosmos, thereby increasing its complexity. Arguably, this resonates well with the Sumerian concept of a peaceful creation and is so unlike the Babylonian theomachy.

On the other hand, in a manner resembling some ANE myths, God continues creation through *separatio* and *emersio*,[22] thus providing everything necessary for a productive life on earth, such as the light (Gen. 1:2–5), the elements of the inanimate atmosphere (Gen. 1:6–8), the soil (Gen. 1:9–10), the vegetation (Gen 1:11–13), the inanimate heavenly luminaries (Gen. 1:14–19), and the animals (Gen. 1:20–25). Finally, He creates man through *formatio* (Gen. 1:26–27 || Gen. 2:7) and delegates to him dominion over the created world (Gen. 1:28). However, unlike the Mesopotamian and Egyptian traditions, no other god, or a goddess, or magic spell is involved in the process of making humans. Then Adam is placed in a fruitful Garden, prepared by God, to tend it, guard it, feed from it (Gen. 2:15–17), and have fellowship with the Lord in it (Gen. 3:8). Thus, theogony, the gods centered universe, and the violent succession of divinities are nowhere to be found in Genesis 1. The city as God's demesne and the abode of the heavenly divine society per Mesopotamian myths is, likewise, absent. It is not even mentioned as a symbolic locale of God's creative activity, as is the case in the Egyptian theologies. So, the divine realm in Genesis is neither seen in human sociomorphic terms nor envisioned as the Cosmic Mountain.

Genesis 1 and Other Creation Accounts in the Hebrew Bible

As Clifford notes, every Semitic creation mythopoetic narration gradually moves from

[22] Contra-Walton, God's creative activity is not limited to *separatio* only. See John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 33. Also, Gordon J. Wenham, *Rethinking Genesis 1–11: Gateway to the Bible* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015), 13.

chaos to an ordered human society.[23] The primary example is *Enuma Elish* where cosmogony and anthropogony follow theomachy; however, the Ras Shamra texts too contain material thematically similar to the Babylonian theomachy. Thus, Fisher suggests that the Ugaritic Baal Cycle presents a "Baal type" creation myth in which kingship, proper natural rhythms, and fecundity are established through conflict.[24] There are several passages in various OT books, especially the book of Psalms, which are regarded as alternative versions of the creation account in Genesis 1. So, parts of Psalms 74:12–17; 77:12–21; 89:10–15, the whole Psalm104, and Isaiah 40:3–4; 41:14–20 are deemed as cosmological.[25] Their alleged characteristic is that they contain familiar *Chaoskampf* elements common to the Canaanite/Ugaritic myths.[26] However, careful exegesis of these passages and comparison with *Enuma Elish* and The Baal Cycle,[27] reveal a very different picture that defies the prevalent view on the topic.[28] At any rate, the whole *Chaoskamph* theory has recently become the subject of serious criticism.[29]

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[23] Clifford, *Cosmogonies in the Ugaritic Texts*, 185–86. Curiously, the Hittite myths are out of the equation.

[24] Fisher, *Creation at Ugarit*, 313–324. All the same, the Baal Cycle theomachies primarily decide who the rightful ruler of the already existing realms is, while ordering the already existing cosmos is not the same as creating an orderly cosmos. Walton properly points to the political motifs behind the Ugaritic theomachies; see Walton, *Creation in Genesis*, 51.

[25] However, they are outside the scope of this inquiry.

[26] See Tsumura's criticism of forcing "chaos" onto Genesis 1:2. "The Doctrine of Creation *ex nihilo* and the Translation of *tōhû wābōhû*," in *Pentateuchal Traditions in the Late Second Temple Period: Proceedings of the International Workshop in Tokyo, August 28–31, 2007*, ed. Akio Moriya and Gohei Hata (Leiden, NL; Boston, MA: Brill Academic Pub, 2012), 6–21.

[27] For Morton Smith's suspicion regarding the use of the material from Ugarit for comparative studies, see Morton Smith, *Studies in the Cult of Yahweh*, ed. Shaye J. D. Cohen, vol. 1: Studies in Historical Method, Ancient Israel, Ancient Judaism (Leiden, NL: Brill, 1995), 16.

[28] Tsumura writes that the "Ugaritic mythological texts which deal with the "conflict" motif should not be treated as the examples of the *Chaoskampf* either. They are depicting theomachy between two or more deities. But in the case of Yahweh's battles against the power of evil, those struggles might be described as divine battle rather than theomachy, because his enemies are nothing like a deity who can cope with Yahweh but simply creatures destined to be destroyed by Yahweh. They have nothing to do with the motif of creation, i.e. the idea of cosmic origin, and there is no cosmic dualism in the whole Bible." David T. Tsumura, "Chaos and Chaoskampf in the Bible: Is 'Chaos' a Suitable Term to Describe Creation or Conflict in the Bible?," *Academia*, last modified 2022, https://tinyurl.com/5n94n843 (accessed May 9, 2023).

[29] See Rebecca S. Watson, *Chaos Uncreated: A Reassessment of the Theme of "Chaos" in the Hebrew Bible* (Berlin, GE: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), passim. Also, Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction*, passim.

The City in Genesis 1–2: Biblical Anthropogony

Genesis 1:26–28

The narrative structure of Genesis 1 makes it clear that the making of Adam is the final step of the creation process and its crown accomplishment.[30] In the Genesis 1:26–28 passage, the word עשה is interchangeably used with ברא, indicating that the involved activity was more than some kind of functional separation (Gen. 1:26–27). At the same time, the triple use of ברא in Genesis 1:27 underscores the importance of the introduction of a new and different kind of living being in the cosmos. Even the mechanism of the forming of man is carefully detailed; unlike animals, which were "delivered" (תוצא, *Hifil*) by the soil (Gen. 1:24–25) in the same manner as vegetation (Gen. 1:11–12) by divine fiat, God was actively involved in the creation of man (Gen. 1:26–28). So, Adam is not created למינו, as the other living beings (Gen. 1:11–12, 21–22, 24–25), but כדמותנו בצלמנו (Gen. 1:26), though "in a shadow of our likeness" in reality points to an approximation of the divine image. However, man is not created as a singular being but rather as a family; humanity properly consists of two complementary opposites (Gen. 1:27). Thus created mankind has a clear purpose that is directly related to their image, which is to populate and rule the world's earthly realm (Gen. 1:26, 28). Finally, there is instruction on appropriate alimentation (Gen. 1:29). Thus, the sequence of the creation of humanity follows these steps: (1) the initial creation; (2) the ordinance of the purpose; (3) the delegation of authority; and (4) the pedagogy of life. The so-called "alternative account" of the creation of man in Genesis 2 largely corresponds to this pattern, and its details complement the Genesis 1:26–29 passage. However,

[30] Gordon H. Johnston, "Context and Contextualization of Ancient Israelite Creation Theology: Genesis 1:1-2:3 in the Light of Ancient Egyptian Creation Myths" (Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Washington, DC, 2006), 1–51, https://tinyurl.com/yrbfuahw (accessed May 12, 2023).

the city does not appear as a place where any of the aforementioned activities happen or as a designated or destined habitat for man, as is the case in Mesopotamia.[31]

Genesis 1:26: "Let us make man"

The indications of the operation of the heavenly court appear three times in Genesis 1–11, in (1) the Creation story (Gen. 1:26), the Garden story (Gen. 3:22), and (3) the Tower of Babel story (Gen. 11:7). Every instance is very short and bereft of details that would designate its nature, structure, and mode of operation. In all three cases, the same formula is applied: (a) God calls for an action (the verb in the plural), that is, (b) immediately executed (the verb in the singular). It is obvious that the Lord's heavenly coterie does not consist of the members of divine hierarchies and officials connected by familial ties and engaged in the governance of their particular cosmic realm, locality, and/or a functional domain.[32] The political significance of the institution is indeed preserved; however, God is sovereign, unequaled, and the sole ruler of the universe, who is guided by His own will and intentions.[33] This is not simply monotheism versus polytheism differentiation; to the contrary, the transposition of the earthly social structure onto the heavenly realities is completely repudiated.[34]

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[31] Originally, Sumerian deities were represented with abstract symbols; however, with the rise of the kingship, they received teriomorphic and anthropomorphic shapes and behaved as human families that were taken care of by the human priesthood. The Bible reverses this completely; thus, man is created in God's image and is seated on an elevated and protected place (in the Garden in Eden instead on the Cosmic Mountain) with divine provision of food (Genesis 2) and clothing (Genesis 3).

[32] The Divine Council is often depicted in the ANE literature; however, the local distinctions are very prominent, with Mesopotamian ideas on one pole, Ugarit/Canaanite showing affinities with Mesopotamia, and Egypt with its local versions of the divine assemblies on the opposite ideological pole. In its original form, the assembly of the gods replicates the social organization of the Sumerian village, city, and city-state. See Thorkild Jacobsen, "Mesopotamian Gods and Pantheons," in *Toward the Image of Tammuz and Other Essays on Mesopotamian History and Culture*, ed. William L. Moran (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), 16–38.

[33] After Patrick D. Miller, "Cosmology and World Order in the Old Testament: The Divine Council as Cosmic-Political Symbol," in *Israelite Religion and Biblical Theology: Collected Essays* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 422–44.

[34] Pagan deities are part of the creation, albeit on a higher level. Thus, gods create primordial cities, and when they populate them with men, these cities suddenly become earthly cities. But absolute transcendence is

Genesis 2:7–2:15

The complexity of Genesis 2 equals the intricacies of the previous chapter in every respect. The central part, which consists of eight verses (Gen. 2:7–2:15), is of particular interest because it gives an account of the creation of man from a different angle. The imagery is in part reminiscent of the Egyptian stories of the origin of humanity but much closer to the Sumerian mythopoetic narratives.[35] The familiar elements from some of the myths, such as the earth and the divine spirit that fashion and quicken human beings, appear in the Bible, too.

At the same time, there are great differences between the biblical account and the ANE mythopoeic narratives. Thus, the Bible laconically states that man was "formed" of "dust" and enlivened by the Lord's "breath," thereby becoming a "living soul" (Gen. 2:7). Ostensibly, Adam was created in Eden, though the real location is nowhere stated. However, in Sumerian and Akkadian myths, humans are both implicitly and explicitly made in the cities.[36] Moreover, in Mesopotamia, men are created to live in the cities,[37] while in the Bible the first man and the first couple, respectively, live in a garden (Gen. 2:8–3:23). Likewise, Babylonian myths take pains to explain that humans are created to relieve gods from their duties and to serve their needs,[38] while in Egypt they are mere accidental.

In the Bible, according to the passage under inquiry, the purpose of man is to "work" and "keep" the garden in which he lives (Gen 2:15). According to some views, these apparently

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embedded in the biblical creation narrative. Thus, God of the Scripture does not need the city, which is a part of this creation, as a support base or the temple as a provider for the daily needs. Consequently, there is no sociomorphism, no transposition of the earthly polity onto heaven. For this reason, the assembly of gods is hinted at but it is undefined since it is unnecessary to assist God as He acts as a sovereign.

[35] However, the Mesopotamian myths and the Bible display greater affinity. See Peeter Espak, "Genesis 4,1 and Ancient Near Eastern Mythology. How Was the First Man Born?" in *Ideas of Man in the Conceptions of the Religions*, ed. Tarmo Kulmar and Rudiger Schmitt (Munster, D: Ugarit Verlag, 2012), 45–70.

[36] I.e., *Enki and Ninmah*. Also, Leick, *Mesopotamia: The Invention of the City*, 2.

[37] Mieroop, *Ancient Mesopotamian City*, 226.

[38] Jacobsen, *Cosmos as a State*, 191.

mundane words convey a much more complex meaning that adds to the purpose of man stated in Genesis 1:28. Thus, עבד and שמר are often understood as technical terms for the priestly service, especially in conjunction (Gen. 2:15).[39] The prophetic office is, likewise, underlined in Genesis 2:23–24, where Adam makes a long pronouncement. On the other hand, when Adam's tasks as the gardener are considered, they refer to the proactive care of the creation by maintaining order within the entrusted habitat made by the Lord.[40] In this respect, the task of guarding corresponds to the image of a cherub (Gen. 1:26) and its guardianship (Gen. 3:24).[41] Thus, man's earthly responsibilities, as implied by *imago dei*, are the kingship and the guardianship that are initially narrowly directed to agriculture and herding, which represent the minimal requirements for civilization. In other words, divine rule aims to extend self in human society and culture,[42] which implies the import of heavenly principles, structures, and values into the world.

In this regard, the success of civilized life and the well-being of the citizens in Sumer depended on the *mes*, which are the principles of wisdom and the principal activities graciously given by the gods to the cities. So, for the Sumerians and the Akkadians, the thing conceptually closest to paradise was the city.[43] Strikingly, in a similar manner, God issues the commandments to Adam that set the rules for his well-being (Gen. 2:16–17). However, these rules are given in

[39] For an in-depth treatise on the subject, see Sailhamer, *Pentateuch as Narrative*, 100–2. However, these two words stand primarily for Levitical duties (Num. 3:7–8; 8:26; 1 Chr. 23:32; Ezek. 44:14), and only once are they related to priestly duties (Num. 18:3–7). Likewise, the same word combination designates the duties of the king (1 Kgs. 9:6).

[40] Gregory Jacobs, "Temple Theology and Creation," *CPST* 9 (2013), https://tinyurl.com/yvvkwmfa.(accessed May 15, 2023).

[41] J. Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005), 58–59.

[42] Ibid., 60.

[43] "The Mesopotamian Eden is not a garden but a city, formed from a piece of dry land surrounded by the waters. The first building is a temple. Then mankind is created to render service to god and temple. This is how Mesopotamian tradition presented the evolution and function of cities, and Eridu provides the mythical paradigm. Contrary to the biblical Eden, from which man was banished for ever after the Fall, Eridu remained a real place, imbued with sacredness but always accessible." Leick, *Mesopotamia: The Invention of the City*, 1–2.

the Garden and they are only two, related to simple obedience: eat and do not eat. Unlike in Mesopotamia, their violation endangers the very life of man, as well as his presence in the Garden (Gen. 3:22–24) and, more importantly, his relationship with God (Gen. 3:8–10).

Usually, the priestly duty in the ANE world was assigned to the king, while the maintenance of the cosmic order was the responsibility of the gods. The order within society, meaning the city and its people, was delegated to the king. In contrast, Genesis 2 furthers the anthropomorphic world as the goal behind creation while avoiding explicit ANE rudiments.

The City and Kingship

The expression בצלם אלהים in Genesis 1:27 evokes LBA Egyptian and IA1 Assyrian royal descriptions and designations.[44] However, the doublet בצלמנו כדמותנו in Genesis 1:26 is repeated in Genesis 5:1–3 with emphasis on the sonship, which corresponds to the notion of the king as the son of a god in the ANE context.[45] The "image" statement is accompanied by a couple of concordant terms that define the duties of the bearer of divine likeness as כבשה ורדו, which connote a measure of the compulsory power and are prerogatives of the monarch (Gen. 1:28).[46] However, the kingship, as the attribute of God's image, is not conferred on a particular individual but entrusted to האדם in its more general and encompassing meaning as humanity (Gen. 1:26, 28–29).[47] The other duty is designated as פרו ורבו and reveals the purview of the royal

[44] The majority of the available examples come from the Assyrian inscriptions; see Sarna, *Torah Commentary*, 12. However, more frequently in the late Egyptian sources, usually referring to the king, see ABD, "Image of God (OT)".

[45] Catherine L. McDowell, *The Image of God in the Garden of Eden: The Creation of Humankind in Genesis 2:5–3:24 in Light of the Mīs Pî, Pīt Pî, and Wpt-r Rituals of Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 131–36.

[46] Middleton, *Liberating Image*, 25–26; also, Sarna, *Torah Commentary*, 12–13.

[47] Walton writes that the "ancient Near Eastern confidence that deity had chosen the king can be seen in the Davidic covenant, but that is subordinate to the larger confidence that God had chosen Israel. Thus the status of the

authority, which is twice specified as הארץ in Genesis 1:28.

The biblical narrative has an interesting parallel in *Enuma Elish*, where An creates Nudimud (Ea, Enki) in his own image, while the older Sumerian sources already maintain that Enki is the king in his own right.[48] Yet, in Genesis, it is humans that are created in God's image to be His coregents. Accordingly, the role of humanity is narrowly defined in terms of (a) the representation of the divine image on earth and (b) the agency of divine purposes within the constraints of the earthly realm. In a reversal of the ANE anthropogenic direction, man is not a slave purposed to provide relief and provisions to the gods. Importantly, the subject of Adam's kingship is not a city and its people but the natural environment—the earth, the plants, and the animals (Gen. 1:28–29).

The City and the Temple

The Cosmic Temple

Some ANE myths contain accounts of the founding of the temples, such as Sumerian *Enki and the World Order* or Ugaritic *The Palace of Baal*, which are often analyzed and compared with the creation accounts in Genesis 1 and 2.[49] However, the story most referred to is

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king becomes only a corollary to the status of the people as a guiding concept... All of this contrasts with Israelite concepts. The people request kingship, and Yahweh grants it somewhat grudgingly (1 Sam. 8). Deuteronomy 18 presents a negative view of kingship rather than lauding it as the highest form of humanity. In the early chapters of Genesis, kingship is noticeably absent. Archetypal humanity bears the image of God rather than this being a distinctive of the king. Likewise, they are charged with subduing and ruling. When we first encounter individuals playing out the role of king in one form or another (without the title) they offer negative depictions—the violent arrogance of Lamech and the imperialism of Nimrod." John H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 280–81.

[48] Espak's chronological analysis of Sumerian, Akkadian, Babylonian, and Assyrian myths related to anthropogony yields some very important conclusions. First, the Genesis anthropogony is the most reciprocal of the oldest Sumerian myths. Second, most of the alleged parallels between the ANE mythology and the Genesis creation narratives cannot be sustained. Espak, *Genesis 4*, 65–66.

[49] Raymond C. Van Leeuwen, "Cosmos, Temple, House: Building and Wisdom in Mesopotamia and Israel," in *Wisdom Literature in Mesopotamia and Israel*, ed. Richard J. Clifford (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 69–70.

contained in *Enuma Elish*, because the founding of the Marduk's shrine is set at the end of a larger creation setting and is related to the divine rest. Thus, Walton suggests that the text in Genesis 1:1–2:3 displays conceptual similarities with Marduk's myth and proposes that the biblical narrative indicates God establishing His Cosmic Temple and resting in it.[50] Yet, while the end of Genesis 1 contains enough exegetical clues to suggest the royal role of humanity, the hints that would support Walton's thesis might not be exactly there in the biblical text.[51]

Walton refers to Levenson to support his ideas.[52] Indeed, Levenson draws attention to the parallels between the creation of the cosmos and the Tabernacle, with the Sabbath as the culmination of creation and the Lord resting in it.[53] He concludes that the temple is the token of creation and serves as a reminder of the Sabbath. However, God did not *rest* in *a certain space*; He *ceased* His works at a certain *point in time* (Gen. 2:2–3)! Thus, Heschel starts from the same comparative points as Levenson and concludes that the Sabbath is *the sanctuary in time*.[54] This is

[50] Walton, *Lost World of Genesis One*, 74–91. As far as Walton's Cosmic Temple idea is concerned, his major premises are: (a) "the temple is, for all intents and purposes, the cosmos." Therefore, (b) "the cosmos could be viewed as a temple." Moreover, (c) the prophetic texts (i.e., Isa. 66:1–2) propose "a cosmos-sized temple." So, Walton, form his interpretation of the aforementioned passage in Isaiah, derives conclusion that in it "we can see the elements of a cosmos-sized temple, a connection between temple and rest, and a connection between creation and temple. This in itself is sufficient to see that the cosmos can be viewed as a temple." Ibid., 180–184. However, Walton conveniently passes over the fact that the text in Isaiah is a criticism of the temple and "templeism."

[51] Besides forcing the hermeneutical grid external to the Bible, Walton's reading of the ANE myths is very loose. Ibid., 75. Thus, he fails to notice that in *Enuma Elish* Marduk first builds "a house" to his "luxurious abode," then "within it" he "establishes its shrine" (Tablet 5, Lines 122–123). His "house... luxurious abode" is Babylon (Tablet 5, Line 129). Babylon, the city, is the "[resting place] for ever" for all the gods (Tablet 5, Lines 137–138), not a temple or shrine *per se*. Likewise, Marduk speaks about the resting of the gods and includes in it the creation of man to toil instead of the Anunnaki (Tablet 6, Lines 1–16). In response, the assembly of the thankful gods builds Babylon and the shrine for Marduk in it, which will be their resting place once they "finish" their "work" (Tablet 6, Lines 47–54). The order to build and the successive effort show no distinction between Babylon, the city, and the temple (Tablet 6, Lines 55–64). Once the Anunnaki completed their task, Marduk sat in the Esagil with the divine congregation, and the feast commenced (Tablet 6, Lines 65–75). So, the temples are not the places of rest, but when the gods rested from their physical toil in maintaining the primordial city-state, they sat in their temples.

[52] For a critical assessment of Walton's interpretative method, see Noel K. Weeks, "The Bible and the 'Universal' Ancient World: A Critique of John Walton," *WTJ* 1, no. 78 (2016): 1–29.

[53] Jon D. Levenson, "The Temple and the World," *JR* 64, no. 3 (July 1984): 286–88.

[54] Abraham J. Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994), 8–10.

of far-reaching importance, for if God took rest in creation, then He is not different from it, and, consequently, the Bible teaches pantheistic monism garbed in monotheism! Sailhamer, likewise, compares the Tabernacle, albeit with the Garden in Eden, with the overall conclusion that Genesis 1 is the "creation" of the Land of Israel.[55] Above all, the ANE temple was *not* a representation of the finalized cosmos but of the universe in its *primordial* state.

At any rate, there are no explicit or implicit statements in Genesis 1:1–2:3 mentioning the primordial mountain or the temple and its functions in conjunction with the preexisting city, as is the case in Mesopotamia, or a city-temple, as in Egyptian myths. It rather seems that Genesis 2:1–3 is a theological statement aimed at emphasizing the *imago dei* in man by laying the foundation for the consequent Sabbath observance of Israel. As such, this passage is an appropriate introduction for the Garden Story (Gen. 2:4–3:24).[56]

The Garden Temple or a Royal Palace?

Genesis 2 continues the anthropogenic narrative, albeit this time in greater detail and in a vaguely localized setting. The creation of man is the central point of the chapter, but within the context of the creation of beneficial vegetation and the Garden as their depository. This point is of paramount significance, as the chiastic structure of Genesis 2:5–14 illustrates.[57] Though some elements pertaining to the Garden evoke the imagery, functions, and instrumentalities of the sanctuary,[58] the environment hints at a real place.[59] Moreover, the overall scenery, as well as

[55] John Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound: A Provocative New Look at the Creation Account* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Books, 1996), 31–71.

[56] See John Ronning, "The Image and Likeness of God: Genesis 2–4 as Sequel" (ETS Annual Convention, Providence, RI, 2008), 1–21. https://tinyurl.com/mrzu8k67.

[57] Isaac M. Kikawada, "The Irrigation of the Garden of Eden," in *Etudes Hebraiques* (Actes du XXIXe Congres international des Orientalistes, Paris, F: L'Asiatheque, 1975), 29–33.

[58] Gordon J. Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story," in *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies: Jerusalem, August 4–12, 1985* (Jerusalem, IL: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1986), 19–25; John H. Walton, *Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 184–87.

LXX παράδεισον for גן in Genesis 2:8 and 15, suggests the royal garden, which was a standard ANE trope of kingship.[60] This does not exclude the sacerdotal role of the king, since there are enough hints in the section (Gen. 2:4–3:24) to suggest Adam's role as *munus triplex*.[61] However, the text is notoriously ambiguous, never allowing an explicit and/or affirmatory conclusion on the real nature of the Garden. [62] One thing is clear, though: the Garden is intended to be Adam's habitat or residence, with the wider area of Eden as his demesne.[63] Conversely, if the intended imagery really reflects a temple, then Adam is the image of God[64] in the inner sanctum, and the Garden is a portal for the occasional divine presence and *not* a divine habitation (Gen. 3:8).

The City, the Temple or the Garden?

The anthropomorphism of the Mesopotamian myths is so intense that at times it is very difficult to discern whether the heavenly realm replicates itself among men or whether men replicate themselves in the heavenly realm. This stands in stark contrast with the biblical critique of this concept epitomized in הייתם כאלהים (Gen. 3:5). If the Primeval History (Genesis 1–11) is indeed a covert apology that, through literary subversion and tacit polemics, opposes the ANE

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[59] Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, Gen 2:8.

[60] Michael LeFebvre, "Adam Reigns in Eden: Genesis and the Origins of Kingship," *BET* 5, no. 2 (2028): 30–31; A. Leo Oppenheim, "On Royal Gardens in Mesopotamia," *JNES* 24, no. 4 (1965): 328–33. According to Wyatt, the whole story is a political metaphor related to the Jerusalem monarchy, with "garden" as the code designation for the city itself. Nicolas Wyatt, "A Royal Garden: The Ideology of Eden," *SJOT* 28, no. 1 (2014): 1–35.

[61] LeFebvre, *Adam Reigns in Eden*, 29–34.

[62] Van Ruiten offers serious exegetical and intertextual criticism of the Garden in Eden as a sanctuary view. See J. T. A. G. M. van Ruiten, "Visions of the Temple in the Book of Jubilees," in *Gemeinde ohne Tempel /Community without Temple: Zur Substituierung und Transformation des Jerusalemer Tempels und seines Kults im Alten Testament, antiken ... zum Neuen Testament 118)*, ed. Beate Ego et al. (Tübingen, D: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 220–223. Likewise, Block expresses grave hermeneutical doubts concerning the same idea. See Daniel I. Block "Eden: A Temple? A Reassessment of the Biblical Evidence," in *From Creation to New Creation: Biblical Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Daniel Gurtner and Benjamin L. Gladd (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2013), 3–32.

[63] Wyatt, *Royal Garden*, 24–26.

[64] Even the ANE gods, in a limited way, "lived" in the temples via their statues. For a helpful discussion on the subject of "image", see McDowell, *Image of God*, 43–177.

worldview,[65] then Adam and Eve, with their progeny, could metaphorically stand for the totality of Mesopotamian culture and religion.[66]

In this regard, it is important to notice that Sumerian temples were not only places of worship but also great socio-economic institutions that operated for the benefit of a city-based community by providing jobs and distributing the yield.[67] Thus, the temple was the center of the city's economic activity and was inevitably linked to the overall prosperity and accomplishments of that time. This concept and the related functions are not documented in other regions and periods of the ANE world. Still, some of the established operations were preserved under the mixed economy of the Amorite, the Kassite, and the Chaldean successors of the Sumerians, albeit under tight royal supervision and control. Markedly, these elements are completely absent in the Genesis narrative. Though the account of the primeval garden abode of man carries marks of the sanctuary and/or the royal palace construct, the duties of the humans are related to the garden and laconically described as farming and guardianship. The provision was prepared for them by God, not vice versa, and was easily accessible without the need for tiresome labor. Whatever the Garden was, it was not a temple or royal economic powerhouse with workshops and extensive production, but a human living quarter and a designated meeting place for God and

[65] Brian Godawa, "Old Testament Storytelling Apologetics," *CRJ* 34, no. 3 (2011): 24–30. Also, see a dated yet still relevant article by Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Significance of the Cosmology in Genesis 1 in Relation to Ancient Near Eastern Parallels," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 10, no. 1 (1972): 1–20. Walton does not perceive Genesis 1 as strictly polemical, yet allows that it could be understood as such; see Walton, *Lost World of Genesis One*, 102–3. However, compare with John D. Currid, *Against the Gods: The Polemical Theology of the Old Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), passim.

[66] In the words of Kramer, "theoretically at least, the Sumerian theologians taught that man was created by the gods solely to serve and tend then and presumably, therefore, that the god-man relationship corresponded to that of master-slave." Kramer, *The Sumerians*, 258.

[67] Though generalizations along these lines may be misleading due to the lack of written evidence coming from other places, this is very much observable in the city of Lagash, where the temple was in charge of manufacturing pottery, textile, and public works such as canal digging and brick making. Consequently, the temple was in charge of paying the wages, which consisted of food and beer distribution to the laborers as well as remuneration for the priests and temple workers, such as scribes, cleaners, doorkeepers, and guards.

man. Thus, the Garden negates any need for both the city and the temple as the necessary preconditions for life and worship.

The City in Genesis 4–6

The city in Mesopotamia was the cornerstone of human well-being, culture, and prosperity and, as such, was considered a divine gift and accordingly treated in the myths. The wisdom, instruction, and guidance in founding the cities were ascribed either to the gods, the semi-divine heroes like Gilgamesh, or the sages represented in Apkallus. The last traditions survived until the Late Babylonian period, as witnessed by Berossus. A similar mytheme, though, in the reversed order as sage-king-god was present among the Phoenicians was recorded by Philo of Byblos in the first century AD and has some affinities with Genesis 4–5.[68] However, in Genesis 1–11, the city and human civilization take a different direction and are built without divine involvement and agency[69] or the consequent deification of the builders. At any rate, there are four stories in Primordial History related to the city of which the first, The Story of Cain (Gen 4:2–24) is the pre-Flood account that describes the origin of the city.

The City in Genesis 4:17–24: The City of Cain

In Sumerian *Eridu Genesis*, after creation, men are in a primitive state of existence, but the goddess Nintur leads them "back" to the city, its economy, and religion. The city life causes humanity to multiply, prosper, get organized under the kingship, and attain a long and memorable history. Although this line of development is, in general terms, recognizable in the biblical account, any interest in the cities is completely absent from Genesis 1–3.[70] On the other

[68] Hallo, *Antediluvian Cities*, 63.

[69] After David P. Melvin, "Divine Mediation and the Rise of Civilization in Mesopotamian Literature and in Genesis 1–11," *JHS* 10, no. August (2017). https://doi.org/10.5508/jhs.2010.v10.a17 (accessed May 20, 2023).

[70] Patrick D. Miller, "Eridu, Dunnu, and Babel: A Study in Comparative Mythology," in *Israelite Religion and Biblical Theology: Collected Essays* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 121–122.

hand, there are some similarities between the plot in *The Theogony of Dunnu* (*The Harab Myth*) and Genesis 1–4. So, in *The Harab* ("wasteland") *Myth*, the creation sequence moves from (a) the plowing of the earth, which causes (b) the emergence of the deified sea, over the emersion of (c) the shepherd god, to the creation of (d) the City of Dunnu. Likewise, in the Genesis account, the creation sequence is conceptually the same: the earth, the sea, and man are created; then, the city is built. The first occurrence of the city in Scripture is in Chapter 4; strikingly, just like the city of Dunnu, it is related to a murder. However, this is how far the affinities go; everything else is prominently different.

The biblical verse in which the city is mentioned (Gen. 4:17) is set within the Story of Cain (Gen. 4:2–24), which serves as the etiology for the founding of the city. The story is set within a larger, genealogy-related textual unit that skillfully connects the previous (Gen. 2:4–3:24), and the following sections (Genesis 5).[71] Structurally, the Story of Cain is in the center of a complex chiastic structure that is enveloped by two panels containing cascading parallelisms (Gen. 4:1–2 || Gen. 4:25–26), which frame it. From the view of formal composition, the account is a historical narrative that ends with a poetic discourse (Gen. 4:23) and an epilogue (Gen. 4:25–26). Numerous parallels between the Adam and Cain stories[72] emphasize the essential unity of Chapters 2–4 as they culminate in the emergence of society and civilization. The themes and motifs treated in the chapters also help transit and connect the Creation and the Flood narratives. When all literary and structural devices are taken into consideration,[73] the passage related to the city and its appendages (Gen. 4:17–24) represents a very important and germane sequence in the

[71] Sailhamer, *Pentateuch as Narrative*, 111.

[72] Alan J. Hauser, "Linguistic and Thematic Links Between Genesis 4:1–16 and Genesis 2-3," *JETS* 23, no. 4 (1980): 297–305; Thomas L. Brodie, *Genesis as Dialogue: A Literary, Historical, and Theological Commentary* (Oxford, GB; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 142–56.

[73] Daniel D. Lowery, *Toward a Poetics of Genesis 1–11: Reading Genesis 4:17–22 in Its Ancient Near Eastern Context* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 74–77 and 87–88.

Primeval History.

The Genesis 4 narrative is very complex and multilayered. Still, from the perspective of the origin of the city, the Story of Cain (Gen. 4:2–24) can serve as a framework that can be divided into three parts: (b) before the founding of the city (Gen. 4:2–16, (b) the city is founded (Gen. 4:17), and (c) after the founding of the city (Gen. 4:18–24). The first part gives the etiology of the city, pointing to the fratricide that led to Cain's exile eastward from Eden, his condemnation of a nomadic lifestyle,[74] and his response to his situation. It is ironic that Cain's removal from God's presence in Eden ultimately ends up with his self-exile in the city. This human tendency to seek a solution for his situation in "citification" will culminate in Genesis 11:1–9, when the whole generation, in its constant move toward the east, will be expulsed from Babel, the city, and scattered throughout the earth.

The central section key verse (Gen. 4:17) is very terse, and its ambiguity raises some questions regarding the identity of the builder of the city;[75] yet the peculiar expression ויהי בנה עיר is very telling.[76] It hints that it requires a permanent and unending effort to establish and maintain an intense and complex society that the city substantiates. This motif will appear again in Genesis 11:8. Accordingly, v. 17 expands into a genealogy comprised both of the city-dwelling and, also, the seminomadic descendants.[77] This posterity appears quite inventive but, equally, very violent, and eventually will end up in the Flood (Genesis 6–7).

The overall context of Chapter 4 indicates the existence of an economy based on

[74] The royal prerogatives bestowed on Adam were not transferred to Cain. However, Cain continues the way of life of his father as an agriculturist, which is quite curious since farming requires a settled life, and thus urbanism coincides with agriculture. After Hallo, *Antediluvian Cities*, 63–64.

[75] Who was the first city builder, Cain or his son Enoch? Ibid., 44.

[76] The line says that "[he] was building a city" with בֹּנֶה, which is *Qal* participle active, indicating a progressive continual action. Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are my own translation.

[77] Sigmund A. Wagner-Tsukamoto, "The Cities of Genesis: Religion, Economics and the Rise of Modernity," *TC* 11, no. 1/2 (2017): 217–18.

agriculture and herding (Gen. 4:2), which resonates well with the early urban situation in Sumer. Likewise, the textual allusion to pastoralism in alignment with the city (Gen. 4:17–20) corresponds to the Amorite Syrian situation (i.e., Ebla). In conjunction with the economy, entertainment (Gen. 4:21), technology (Gen. 4:22), and the rudimentary legal system (Gen. 4:23–24), closely depict the developed city-oriented life of Mesopotamia.[78]

Due to their attainments, the ANE cities and their temples were considered the earthly representatives of the heavenly realities and their essential extensions. While the West Semitic writings are mostly silent regarding the city's origin, the city is still personified and deified.[79] When contrasted with these attitudes, the first city in the Bible appears under vastly different circumstances as a result of a murder, the consequent alienation from God, and as a product of the solution outside of the divine will (Gen. 4:12 ≭ Gen. 4:16–17). Moreover, Cain's city stands in direct opposition to the Garden in Eden[80] and represents the move from personal to societal sin. Thus, the city is neither presented as a divine institution nor a gift from heaven, nor are its accomplishments commended. Notwithstanding the economic and social resemblances, there are no mythical elements in the biblical account of the origin of the city. In this regard, the nature of the founding of the city and its connection to the invention of technology (Gen. 4:17–22)[81]

[78] All these elements (Gen. 4:23–24 || Gen. 6:11–13) reflect the EDII and the later periods of the Sumer situation and could hint to Cain as the epitomic image of a dynastic monarch. After LeFebvre, *Adam Reigns in Eden*, 45–46.

[79] Mark E. Biddle, "The Figure of Lady Jerusalem: Identification, Deification and Personification of Cities in the Ancient Near East," in *The Biblical Canon in Comparative Perspective* (ed. K. Lawson Younger; Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1991), 179.

[80] Based on the comparative exegesis of Gen. 2:7–14 and Gen. 4:12–17; however, LeFebvre proposes a curious argument based on Adam's and Cain's kingships. LeFebvre, *Adam Reigns in Eden*, 45–52.

[81] Lowery writes that "Genesis removes technological progress from the realm of the gods and places it solely within the sphere of human activities... Technological advancement, according to Genesis, was the product of human enterprise. The enterprising humans, according to God (as depicted by our narrator shortly after the Cainite genealogy) were inclined toward evil all the time (Gen. 6:5–6)." Lowery, *Poetics of Genesis*, 93.

parallels more than any other the Phoenician/Canaanite traditions.[82] However, Cain and his descendants were not deified, as was the case with the "cultural heroes" of Philo of Byblos.[83]

Divine Alternative to the City of Cain (Man)

Genesis 1–11 does not suggest any elaborate multivariable system as an alternative to the city. Instead, it builds on the original divine intention distilled in the concept of "walking with God" (Gen. 3:8–9), later denoted as *imitatio dei*, and tacitly suggests avoiding city life. Thus, the chosen line of Enosh is described as having distinctive spiritual affinities and, presumably, as being nomadic. Accordingly, the representatives of Cain's and Enosh's seventh generation are sharply contrasted. Lamech is a brute tyrant (Gen. 4:23), while Enoch יתהלך את האלהים (Gen. 5:22–24). Likewise, the Cainites perish in the Flood while Noah את האלהים התהלך (Gen. 6:9) and survives.[84] This may seem like a theocratic bent, yet history before and after Abraham, who was commanded to התהלך לפני (Gen. 17:1), points rather toward a family structure under God of the fathers. This arrangement favors personal responsibility and liberty in worship within environs dissociated from the economic and political entanglement of institutionalized religion.

The City in Genesis 6–8: The Flood

Sumerian texts present an impressive list of the cities that existed before the Flood, as SKL indicates. The other writings that are more particular and incite greater curiosity are OB the *Atrahasis Epic* and NS the *Eridu Genesis*. The former text talks about the Flood as the solution

[82] Lowery, *Poetics of Genesis*, 97; also, Hallo, *Antediluvian Cities,* 54. In a way resembling Sumerian myths, the city in the Bible appears before the technological advancements that make and mark civilization. However, the origin of the city is not divine but a result of the spiral of man's sin. Moreover, technology is ascribed to the nomadic posterity of Cain, not to the gods.

[83] Lowery, *Poetics of Genesis*, 99–101.

[84] Ibid., 76–77.

for, presumably, the urban overpopulation or, possibly, rebellion;[85] the later one lists five principal Sumerian cities and the noise of their inhabitants as the reason for the flood.[86] On the other hand, *Gilgamesh* XI is a fairly late Assyrian redaction in which the Flood is a secondary motif in pursuit of eternal life. However, all these compositions in the background have a highly urbanized context, and the Flood wipes away the cities and the city-based civilization.

In contrast to the Mesopotamian texts, the human inclination toward evil (Gen. 6:5) and the prevalence of violence on earth (Gen. 6:11–13) are the causes behind the Flood in the Bible (Genesis 6–8).[87] Although city is not mentioned anywhere in the narrative, the alternate structural links with the preceding and succeeding pericopes[88] and the progression of the storyline (Gen. 4:8 → Gen. 4:23 → Gen. 6:11–13 → Gen. 9:6) clearly indicate that destruction, as a radical solution, is brought upon the Cain's violent and murderous city-dwelling posterity.[89] However, through Noah, the descendant of the righteous line of Seth (Gen. 5:3), mankind survives the de-creation of the world, and the stage for re-creation and repopulation of the earth is set (Gen. 9:1–7).[90] Noah is like Adam איש האדמה (Gen. 9:20), which signals the reversion to the pre-urban ways of life (Gen. 9:21, 27; 11:1–2) marked by pastoral-nomadism, as indicated by

[85] David T. Tsumura, "Genesis and Ancient Near Eastern Stories of Creation and Flood: An Introduction," in *"I Studied Inscriptions from Before the Flood": Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1–11*, ed. Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 46–47. Likewise, Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "The Atrahasis Epic and Its Significance for Our Understanding of Genesis 1–9," *BA* 40, no. 4 (December 1977): 150–51.

[86] Jacobsen, *Eridu Genesis*, 518–22.

[87] For full lists of similarities and differences between the Mesopotamian and the Biblical Flood accounts, see Tsumura, *Stories of Creation and Flood*, 54–55.

[88] The alternating structure of the Primeval History, see Bruce K. Waltke and Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2001), 19. For some critical points aimed at the attempts to see unity in an, presumably, patchwork of sources, see John Day, *From Creation to Abraham: Further Studies in Genesis 1–11* (New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2021), 131–39.

[89] Wagner-Tsukamoto, *Cities of Genesis*, 218.

[90] Bernhard W. Anderson, *From Creation to New Creation: Old Testament Perspectives* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), 72–73; Wenham, *Rethinking Genesis*, 35–43; Blenkinsopp, *Creation*, 131–54.

the sudden appearance and the world diffusion of the tribes and their clan structure (Gen. 10:1–5).[91]

The City in Genesis 10–11

The remaining three stories in Primordial History related to the city—The Cities of Nimrod (Gen. 10:10–12), The Tower of Babel (Gen 11:1–9), and Abraham Leaves Ur (Gen. 11:27–32)—are the post-Flood accounts. The first two are related to the building of the cities, and the last one expresses the final attitude toward the city expressed before the beginning of the Patriarchal era.

The City in Genesis 10:11–12: The Cities of Nimrod[92]

The post-Flood account related to Ham and his descendants parallels that of Cain (Gen. 9:20–29) and serves as the fitting introduction to The Story of the Nimrod.[93] After the destruction of the antediluvian civilization and its cities, the newly created world is marked by the same endeavor and, again, epitomized by a single man. This motif first appears in Gen. 4:17 and finds its full expression in Nimrod's extensive city-building program (Gen. 10:11–12), which (a) encompasses both Babylonia and Assyria (the two kingdoms that occupied and dominated Mesopotamia during the second and first millennia BC), and (b) an enormously long rule.[94] The note that the beginning of Nimrod's kingdom was Babylon is not accidental; it connects the city and kingship and, essentially, is an ironic reversal of the role of man as the divine viceroy over the whole creation (Gen. 10:10).

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[91] Wagner-Tsukamoto, *Cities of Genesis*, 218.

[92] There have been many attempts to draw parallels between Nimrod and various gods, heroes, and historical rulers, such as Ninurta, Gilgamesh, and Ninus. See Russell Gmirkin, Andrew Mein, and Claudia V. Camp, *Berossus and Genesis, Manetho and Exodus: Hellenistic Histories and the Date of the Pentateuch* (New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2006), 114–118; Blenkinsopp, *Creation*, 161–62.

[93] Lowery, *Poetics of Genesis*, 77; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 19–20.

[94] For the problems related to the Nimrod periscope, see Karel van der Toorn and Pieter W. van der Horst, "Nimrod Before and After the Bible," *HTR* 83, no. 1 (January 1990): 1–16.

The Nimrod Story is embedded in the genealogy of Ham (Gen. 10:8–20) and thematically serves as a prelude to the Story of Babel (Gen. 11:2–9). Just like Cain's story, it emphatically underlines the human origin[95] of the cities and hints at the evolution of the city-state and the kingship into territorial kingdoms and empires.[96] Since the priority of the Assyrian and Babylonian kings was the maintenance and promotion of the cosmic order, war was understood as the act of ordering of the world and urbanization as the civilizing act.

However, the genealogy in Genesis 10:6–20 reveals that Nimrod is not the only builder of the cities; his uncle Canaan and his posterity are the builders, too (Gen. 10:15–29). It is within this context of the Canaanite clans that Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim are first mentioned (Gen. 10:19). This implies that city-building is a trait of the accursed branch of the new humanity and that the iniquity of the founders is embedded in their creation.[97] On the other hand, not a single city is mentioned in the genealogies of Shem (Gen. 10:21–31) and Japheth (Gen. 10:2–5).

The City in Genesis 11:1–9: The Tower of Babel

The City with a Tower account is another example of a story seemingly unrelated to its context that is embedded in the lengthy genealogical section of Noah's sons (Gen. 10:1–32; 11:10–26). However, paradigmatically, it corresponds to the pinnacle of the depravity of Cain's

[95] Nimrud, "we shall rebel" נמרד, can refer to people in their defiance of God. The speculations that he represents "demythologized god Ninurta" are cognizant of the designations expressed in the statements גבר, ציד and לפני יהוה (Gen. 10:9), which indicate his humanity. After Terry Fenton, "Nimrod's Cities: An Item from the Rolling Corpus," in *Genesis, Isaiah and Psalms: A Festschrift to Honour Professor John Emerton for His Eightieth Birthday*, ed. Katharine J. Dell, Graham Davies, and Yee Von Koh (Leiden, NL; Boston, MA: Brill, 2010), 23–31. Also, David P. Melvin, "Divine Mediation and the Rise of Civilization in Mesopotamian Literature and in Genesis 1–11," *JHS* 10, no. August (2017): 7–12.

[96] Likewise, see Blenkinsopp's assessment of Nimord's typology in the Second Temple sources. Blenkinsopp, *Creation*, 163–165. For Nimrod as the embodiment of the Mesopotamian royal ideology, see Day, *From Creation to Abraham*, 194–96.

[97] Rabbinic tradition suggests, among the other interpretations, that Ham raped his father (Gen. 9:20–25).

descendants that serves as the etiology for the Flood (Gen. 6:1–4). Like the story of the sons of God and their insatiate passion for the daughters of men,[98] it introduces the coming judgment and the consequent de-creation of the world through confusion of languages and the scattering of people. Again, it is the city that is at the center of human endeavor and the focus of divine dissatisfaction.

Shem's genealogy starts in Genesis 10:22–32 with emphasis on Joktan but ends abruptly, thus marking the break with the old world. The new world is announced with the second part of the genealogy in Genesis 11:10–26 that puts an accent on Peleg and the time after the scattering. Therefore, the story of the Tower of Babel is enveloped with two lines and two prominent representatives of Shem's posterity. The first line ends up in Babel, the one of Joktan,[99] while the other, the one of Peleg, enters the Promised Land through Abraham Genesis 11:27–12:10.[100]

The Babel Tower story is structured both as two alternating panels (men's speech vs. God's speech) and in a very clear palistrophe[101] that describes human effort to build a city with a tower in it. This brief narrative is replete with elements that parallel the negative causes and effects familiar from the Adam and Cain stories,[102] as well as the motifs from the Flood judgment and de-creation of the world. The descendants of Noah, in defiance of the Lord's command to populate the whole world (Gen. 9:1–7), move to the east, settle in a plain (Gen. 11:2), and build a city with a tower (Gen. 11:4). They are united with one language (Gen. 11:1) and with a single purpose: to prevent their dispersion through the earth (Gen. 11:4). However,

[98] Wenham, *Rethinking Genesis*, 60.

[99] This conclusion is not incompatible with the fact that Nimrod's kingdom began in Babylon (Gen 10:10).

[100] Sailhamer, *Pentateuch as Narrative*, 134.

[101] Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 175–76.

[102] I.e., city as the epitome of idolatry; compare "you shall be as gods" in Gen. 3:4–5 with "make a name for ourselves" in Gen. 11:4! Likewise, the move "eastward" and the building of "city" motifs are repeated.

God is displeased with their arrogance, ideas, and deeds, thus thwarting their plans by confusing their languages, causing them to disband and scatter everywhere (Gen. 11:7–8), thereby preventing them from doing more evil (Gen. 11:6). So, the city, just like Cain's enterprise (Gen. 4:17, בֹּנֶה עִיר), remains hopelessly in flux as the epitome of an interminable project, now personified in Babel (Gen 11:9, ויחדלו לבנת העיר).[103]

The motif of one language on earth is known from the *Enmerkar and Lord of Arrata* epic. Although various translations render the particular passage either in the past[104] or future tenses, there is a moment of tranquility when everything is at peace, with all nations praising Enlil in a single language.[105] One language for the Sumerians meant the hope that their civilization would prevail and become universally accepted. Since all successors of the Sumerians had eagerly adopted their culture and effectively propagated it throughout the ANE world, there was indeed some progress toward this goal. Essentially, the city and the tower symbolize, among the other things, the symbiosis between the political and religious powers, a thriving union that brought much progress to Mesopotamia. In the biblical account, however, the irony is that God had to come down so He could see (Gen. 11:5) the city and the tower whose "top was in the heavens" (Gen. 11:4), thus rendering both of them as minuscule and insignificant. In other words, Genesis deprecates the Sumerian/Mesopotamian urban civilization with its accomplishments.[106]

The Babel Tower story's affinities with the narrative on Adam and Eve's sin are visible in several important details (God walks, Gen. 3:8 || God descends, Gen. 11:5; God speaks, Gen. 3:9–19 || God speaks; Gen. 11:6-7; the return barred, Gen. 3:24 || the building barred, Gen. 11:8;

[103] On Genesis 1–11 as a critique of the Mesopotamian royal ideology, see Middleton, *Liberating Image*, 221–28.

[104] Samuel Noah Kramer, *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta: A Sumerian Epic Tale of Iraq and Iran* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1952), 15.

[105] ETCSL 1.8.2.3, Lines 134–55.

[106] After Wenham, *Rethinking Genesis*, 64–65.

the exile, Gen. 3:23 || the dispersion, Gen. 11:8–9; etc.). However, the major correspondence between the two accounts is the audacity to assume the divine prerogatives: the action toward seizing divine knowledge in Genesis 3:5–6 and the presumption of divine creative imperatives הבה נבנה/הבה נלבנה in building the city and the tower in Genesis 11:3–4. Both attitudes indicate a tendency toward self-deification and are the supreme expressions of idolatry. Moreover, the expression ראשו בשמים in Genesis 11:4 hints at the Sumerian cosmological construct of the temple as the navel of the world that connects heaven and earth. The detail that both the city and the temple were built simultaneously (Gen. 11:4–5) fits well with the other Mesopotamian concepts that emphasize the city-temple symbiosis. Also, the forced expulsion of the builders from Babel, just as Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden, is a parody of the Mesopotamian view of the city as a paradise.

Likewise, the Babel Tower story parallels the Story of Cain in (a) the movement toward the east (Gen. 4:16 || Gen. 11:2); (b) the establishment of the substitute environment as the result of the increased physical and spiritual distance from God (Gen. 4:17 || Gen. 11:4); and (c) the exile/dispersion of the builders (Gen. 4:11–16 || Gen. 11:8–9). The major difference with Cain's story is the integration of the tower with the city, where the tower represents man's wisdom, ingenuity, and determination in an effort to reach heaven on human terms.[107] As already seen, the motives and aspirations behind this undertaking were considered idolatrous by God.

The mentioned traits become major characteristics of the city of Babylon, thus rendering it the prime symbol of idolatry. The association with her first ruler, Nimrud (Gen. 10:8), sets Babylon in the context of wealth, violence, and war. As such, from the later Biblical perspective of the Prophets, Babylon depicts everything that is wrong with the city; thus, she is seen as the ultimate presentation of the anti-city and the very symbol of the rebellion against God.

[107] Michael Gilbertson, *God and History in the Book of Revelation: New Testament Studies in Dialogue with Pannenberg and Moltmann* (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 191.

Genesis 11:27–32: Abraham Leaves Ur

The genealogy of Terah (Gen. 11:27–32) is not an independent account but a part of Shem's lineage. It serves as (a) a bridge between the narratives related to the old failed world and the new one that is emerging, and (b) introduces Abraham as the mediator through whom God intends to start a new family with a new humanity in the view.[108] In comparison with the previous constant moves of humanity toward the east and away from God, Terah and his family are the first to reverse this trend and move in the opposite direction. The former city dwellers leave Ur behind to become nomads in pursuit of God's purposes. Thus, they set the model for the Patriarchs that follow, who will distance themselves from the cities and live in tents. However, the end of Primeval History comes without a closure for the acute crisis in the divine-human relationship escalating in apropos the city, thus anticipating a future solution.[109]

The City and Personal Eschatology in Genesis 1–11

In cosmological terms, "the heaven and the earth" is more than a merrism, since both elements within the context of Genesis 1 refer to the constituents of the universe that God further develops. Furthermore, it is clear that the universe is bipartite,[110] since God created only the heavens and the earth.[111] Consequently, everything else on and beneath the earth is but a part of

[108] Blenkinsopp, *Creation*, 174–74.

[109] Sailhamer, *Pentateuch as Narrative*, 35–37 ; John H. Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch: Revelation, Composition, and Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 233–44.

[110] Keel states that Sheol is an inferior realm; see Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms*, trans. Timothy J. Hallett (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 30 and 35.

[111] Biblical intertextuality supports this claim; compare Genesis 1 and Psalms 8, 104, and 115. After Richard Middleton, "The Role of Human Beings in the Cosmic Temple: The Intersection of Worldviews in Psalms 8 and 104," *CTR* 2, no. 1 (2013): 47–48. *Enuma Elish* and some Canaanite mythological imagery also resonate well with the biblical two-plated cosmos. See Samuel L. Boyd, "A Double-Plated Cosmos? Gen 1's Cosmology, the Baal Stele, and the Logic of a Firmament of the Earth," *JANER* 20, no. 2 (2020): 103–107; likewise, Terence E. Fretheim, *The Suffering of God: An Old Testament Perspective* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984), 37–39.

the earth;[112] such would be the Netherworld, since it is not distinguished as a separate realm.[113] So, it is not described as a city or a temple fated for the dead, as in the ANE myths.[114]

Conclusion

The task of this chapter was to observe the ideas and concepts related to the city in the biblical protology (Genesis 1–11). The analysis of the biblical text attests to a very particular theology of the city that is conspicuously skeptical and tacitly, yet acutely dissents with the prevalent ANE views.

The city is (a) absent in cosmological, cosmogonic, and anthropogenic accounts (Genesis 1–3) and (b) treated discretely and negatively in the early human history narrative (Genesis 4–11). In fact, the creation account sets the stage for the exposition of sharp criticism of all major tenets of the ANE world, most importantly: (a) the cosmology, (b) the royal ideology, (c) the temple institution, and (d) the city-related ideology.[115]

Despite the presence of some familiar rudimentary ANE concepts in Genesis 1, the affinities go only so far, for some crucial themes and motifs are absent. Thus, there is no need for theogony in the universe dominated by one God or a city as His habitat or as an indelible organizing principle of the heavenly realm; rather, anthropogony becomes the center of divine attention. God does not need anything or act for his own benefit; thus, the cosmos appears for the

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[112] The state of the deceased is laconically expressed in God's statement to Adam as אל עפר תשוב (Gen. 3:19), where עפר ("dust") and האדמה ("the soil") are synonymous, both being part of the earth, and with שוב ("return") standing for מות ("die", Gen. 2:17). Thus, Adam's posterity simply died—both the unrighteous (Genesis 5) and the righteous (Gen. 9:1; 10:11–32)—and went to the earth.

[113] See Rolf Knierim's discussion in "Cosmos and History in Israel's Theology," *HBT* 3 (1981): 76–77.

[114] The Hebrew Bible never denotes Sheol as a city, though a couple of places in Psalms (Psa. 9:14; 107:18), Job (Job 24:12; 38:10), and one case in Jonah 2:7 may seem to allude to the contrary. But it is not clear in every instance whether these verses refer to a city or a prison. After Nicolas J. Tromp, *Primitive Conceptions of Death and Death and the Nether World in the Old Testament* (Rome, IT: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969), 152–53.

[115] The Story of Cain represents a critique of the symbiosis of the city and kingship. The story of The Tower of Babel represents a critique of the symbiosis between the city and the temple.

sake of humanity. But anthropogony is not contingent on the existence of the city as the sum of all necessary preconditions for the creation and existence of man.

The exclusion of the city from anthropogony reflects the fundamental theological idea that human progress and civilization sprout from the divine-human relationship, not from the city. So, the Bible avoids referring to a temple and city as the places of human-divine interaction. Instead, Adam is situated in an obscure garden, which God visits to walk with him (Gen. 3:8; 5:22–24). So, any institutional sacral place with its installations is completely absent; God of the Bible relates to man without constraints and the mediation of edifices that mark the ANE world.

The ideological premises that connect the king and the city, so pervasive in the ANE writings, are not present in Genesis 1–11. If Adam is a king, he never builds a city but rules in a garden. It is Cain who is a city-builder, yet he is not a king; or, if he is, the biblical assessment of his kingship and dynasty is absolutely negative.[116] Another builder of the cities, Nimrod, is more than anything else a metaphor in which the whole history of the Mesopotamian city and territorial state is condensed and epitomized. On the other hand, Babel was curiously built by people without any king, just as during the pre- and early Sumerian periods, only to turn into an interminable project.

[116] The skeptical attitude toward kingship in the Bible is very unusual when contrasted with the standard royal ideology and practice in the ancient Near East. Jennie Grillo, "'A King Like the Other Nations': The Foreignness of Tyranny in the Hebrew Bible," in *Evil Lords: Theories and Representations of Tyranny from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, ed. Nikos Panou and Hester Schadee (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018), 27. The adoption of the office of king in Israel is more of a necessity due to outward pressures than a wholehearted conformance to the commonly accepted governing mode prevalent in that era. See William W. Hallo, "Texts, Statues and the Cult of the Divine King," in *Congress Volume: Jerusalem 1986*, ed. John A. Emerton (Leiden, NL: Brill, 1988), 64. Moreover, the history of the kings of Judah and Israel is one of constant failures, tyranny, and disappointment. On Genesis 1–11 as a polemic against the monarchy under Solomon, see Ollenburger, *Zion*, 135. Consequently, the biblical perspective in many respects shifted away from the earthly kingdom, as the present canonical form can attest. Grillo, *King*, 27–28. The criticism of the Oriental type of despotism in 1 Samuel 8, coupled with the simplicity and censured rule of a king prescribed in Deuteronomy 17, set the criterion for a divinely tolerable kingship. See I. Mendelsohn, "Samuel's Denunciation of Kingship in the Light of the Akkadian Documents from Ugarit," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, no. 143 (1956):17–22; also, Grillo, *King*, 29–33. The biblical concept of kingship differs sharply from the Mesopotamian royal ideologies since full authority is not centered in one person but distributed to man, priest, and king.

Likewise, the ideological connection between the city and the temple is not present in Genesis 1–11. Moreover, it is not clear at all that the Garden in Eden was some proto-shrine, as some would like to think. In reality, the Garden resembles more than anything else—a royal palace, not a temple; however, the city that contains and hosts both is not there. At any rate, neither a city nor a shrine appear to be necessary for a society to function. Ultimately, the city, its tower, and the accompanying ideology are rejected as an affront to God.

Finally, the spiritual economy is set against civilization of Cain, the Flood generation, and the builders of the City with Tower. Thus, the city is left to its own devices, abandoned by the chosen line of people who display spiritual orientation by "walking with God" and through whom God intends to create a new humanity. Moreover, the "walk" appears as a divine mandate.

With everything considered, the biblical protology views on the city are the most conversant with the Old Sumerian and Akkadian concepts; however, they stand in sharp contrast to the Mesopotamian ideas and point to different causes and solutions. The influences coming from Egypt are not noticeable in this particular respect, while there are some minute parallels with the late Phoenician ideas in Genesis 4. On the other hand, the impacts of Ugarit are the subject of scholarly debate and relate to the possibility of the import of some cosmological elements in Genesis 1. The influences coming from Syria are related to the general cultural traits shared among the Semites in the region.

Chapter 7: Creation as the Key That Links Protology and Eshatology

The purpose of this chapter is to present the necessary evidence for the claim that creation constitutes the bridge between biblical protology and eschatology. Therefore, concise attention will be given to the theological and structural foundations in the Scriptures that underpin the essential relatedness and coordination of protology and eschatology, with creation as the hermeneutical key that connects them. Likewise, the ANE idea of development through the return to the original pristine state will be briefly discussed as a possible conceptual basis for the biblical orientation. The intention of this chapter is to suggest a theological framework that connects the protological and eschatological material exposed in Chapters 6 and 8.

Creation as the Bridge between Protology and Eschatology

Creation is a divine activity whereby God establishes a suitable environment characterized by orderliness, harmony, and peace in which His presence can abide in communion with humanity. Human fallibility interrupts this order, renders the creation inadequate, and betrays God's purpose. Divine judgment that, consequently, ensues brings everything to the empty slate, from which the world is then re-created and the original order is reestablished. The Pentateuchal narrative gives account of several such crises that eventuate in a renewed effort to reproduce the Edenic state and relationship. These new creation events differ in extent and degree; however, they set the pattern of God's activity that draws its rationale and delineation from protology. Protological elements and determination are projected in the eventual resolve that is anticipated, thus, giving protology a decidedly eschatological tone. Eschatology, on the other hand, declares that realized protology is coming. Within this construct, creation is an ongoing process that aims to recreate the beginning in the end. As such, it both gives impulse to protology and eschatology and is framed by them. Thus, a closer look at the structure of the Book of Genesis demonstrates that the presence of teleological and eschatological elements in it

is not haphazard, but that they are the result of the author's deliberate strategy. Consequently, the overview of the protological themes in the Genesis 1–11 account and the eschatological visions in Revelation 21–22 reveals remarkable parallels between the two texts that strongly suggest a deeper level of mutual interrelatedness.

Teleological Relevance of Genesis

Eichrodt, in his groundbreaking Old Testament theology, suggests the possibility that, within the larger context "the *bereshit*" already contains the idea of "the end of the days".[1] Indeed, its position sets בראשית as the beginning of history (Gen. 1:1), and the inclusio which it forms with אחרית הימים in the closing chapters of Genesis (Gen. 49:1) hints to a historical development, which justifies this proposal. Moreover, Sailhamer points out that all three macrostructural critical points that delineate the larger segments in the Pentateuch (Gen. 49:1; Num. 24:14; Deut. 31:29) contain prophetic statements accompanied by the expression "in the last days".[2] Obviously, באחרית הימים points to a time beyond Genesis and beyond the Pentateuch when the things prophesied will be completed.

Gage's observation that עד כל ימי הארץ ("while the earth remains") in the story of Noah contains "an eschatological terminus" (Gen. 8:22) gives additional support to "a comprehension of the universal time" of Genesis.[3] From the canonical perspective, divine authorship and oversight of history are explicit in the Lord's self-revelation as the first and last ἐγὼ τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὦ, ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος, ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος (Rev. 22:13) and gives the whole

[1] Italics mine. See Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1967), 110.

[2] Sailhamer, *Pentateuch as Narrative*, 35–36.

[3] Gage, *Gospel of Genesis*, 8.

Bible a definite teleological orientation.[4] Thus, the aggregation of all events has as its terminal point the New Heaven and the New Earth (Revelation 21–22), which stand for the whole universe and all that is in it, just as in the beginning.

The Eschatological Significance of Genesis

Gage and Fesko address the issue of protology in eschatology directly and suggest complementary thematic and theological links that connect them. However, the standard or historical approach is to observe eschatologically significant themes in Genesis and their reverberation in the rest of the Bible, with emphasis on their NT fulfillment and/or the pending redemptive resolution at the eschaton.[5] Thus, Andrew Young's proposal is of particular interest for this inquiry. According to his approach, four discrete conceptual frames in Genesis[6] are of eschatological implication: (1) the literary structure, (2) the canonical structure, (3) the covenantal structure, and (4) the redemptive structure.[7]

The literary structure observes (a) the *toledoth* formula[8] and (b) the ancestor epic pattern.[9]

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[4] Ibid., 8.

[5] Jonathan Huddleston, *Eschatology in Genesis*, (Tübingen, GE: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), passim; Christopher K. Lensch, "Eschatology in the Book of Genesis," *The Mountain Retreat, Center for Biblical Theology and Eschatology*, accessed March 30, 2023, https://tinyurl.com/34frr5ym; Andrew Young, "The Eschatology of Genesis, with Particular Reference to Chapters 1 and 2" (Mater, Reformed Theological Seminary, 2007), passim.

[6] Hoffmeier defines the genre of Genesis 1–11 as the family history. See James Hoffmeier, "Genesis 1–11 As History and Theology", in *Genesis: History, Fiction, or Neither?: Three Views on the Bible's Earliest Chapters*, ed. Charles Halton (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 28–29. As opposed to Wenham's idea of "theological history" which borders on identifying it with mythology. See Gordon J. Wenham, "Genesis 1–11 As Protohistory," in *Genesis: History, Fiction, or Neither?: Three Views on the Bible's Earliest Chapters*, ed. Charles Halton (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 83.

[7] Young, *Eschatology of Genesis*, 75–98. What follows is a summary of his thesis, with some necessary modifications.

[8] On *toledoth* formula structure, see Jason S. DeRouchie, "The Blessing-Commission, the Promised Offspring, and the Toledot Structure of Genesis," *JETS* 56, no. 2 (June 2013): 225; T. Desmond Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 103.

[9] On the structure of Genesis 1–11 and its resemblance of *Atrahasis Epic*, see Duane Garrett, *Rethinking Genesis: The Sources and Authorship of the First Book of the Pentateuch* (Fearn, GB: Christian Focus, 2000), 119–23.

Both structures point beyond themselves and progressively develop through the Scriptures until they escalate in the Gospels, since they ultimately point to Christ. It is important to note that unlike the SKL and other royal Mesopotamian genealogies that are political or propaganda tools, the genealogies in Genesis have a decidedly different purpose.

The final canonical shape of the Biblical books reveals that the orientation of both the Old and New Testament historical narratives points toward the future.[10] The affinity of Genesis with the other books within the immediate and larger biblical contexts underlines its eschatological structure. The sequence direction moves to Deuteronomy,[11] Joshua,[12] and then to Revelation. Within this metanarrative, protology and eschatology are clearly interdependent; creation and consummation are two sides of God's redemptive plan for humans and nature. Within the Christian canon of the Bible, Genesis and Revelation complement and clarify each other.

Covenants are the treaties between God as the landlord of the earth and the creatures as His tenants. A covenant, therefore, draws certain boundaries and regulates the duties of the involved parties. In a more particular sense, they are reminders to God's elect that the Lord is the Creator and that His intention is to reestablish the original order and purposes for humanity and the world.[13] Thus, the Adamic,[14] Noahic, and Abrahamic covenants stipulate divine-human relationships in terms that uphold the basic protological concerns: dominion, fruitfulness, land,

[10] John H. Sailhamer, "The Canonical Approach to the OT: Its Effect on Understanding Prophecy," *JETS* 30, no. 3 (September 1987): 307.

[11] For the garden typology, see Alexander, *From Paradise to Promised Land*, 99; Nahum M. Sarna, *Exploring Exodus: The Origins of Biblical Israel* (New York, NY: Schoken Books, 1986), 213–15; Angel M. Rodriguez, "Genesis 1 and the Building of the Israelite Sanctuary," *Ministry* 75, no. 2 (2002): 11.

[12] For the conquest typology, see Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longman III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Leicester, England: Apollos, 1995), 116.

[13] Sailhamer, *Pentateuch as Narrative*, 81.

[14] Beale, *New Testament Biblical Theology*, 42–43.

and blessing. The covenantal promises will find their fulfillment in the coming of the Messiah, who is the mediator of the new covenant and the new world that He inaugurates and will ultimately usher in.

The trajectory of the redemptive structure of Genesis follows a pre-sin state order that is disrupted by Adam's disobedience, the escalation of sin in the Flood sequence, and its reappearance with Noah. Consequently, the biblical narrative is an account of divine acts whereby God brings redemption to His people, the world, and nature. With this in view, redemption history starts in Genesis, and it can be presented as the movement from creation to redemption or renewal to new creation.[15] Within this paradigm, redemption is not only a part of creation or re-creation, but it also becomes the act of new creation.[16] This pattern becomes the primary premise on which biblical theology rests and finds its culmination in the redemptive work of Jesus.[17] Therefore, the New Testament connects the past, present, and future through Jesus Christ by speaking through implicit and explicit references to protology, creation, redemption, and eschatology.

[15] William J. Dumbrell, *The End of the Beginning* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2001), 196

[16] Ibid., 189.

[17] Exodus is the greatest example of redemption and salvation in the Old Testament, and all other redeeming acts in the Bible are modeled on and measured by it. However, the language that describes the exodus of Israel from Egypt and the overall context that surrounds this event is distinctively the language of new creation. See E. Earle Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2003), 131; Fred L. Fisher, "New and Greater Exodus: The Exodus Pattern in the New Testament," *SJT* 20, no. 1 (September 1977): 70–7. Exodus is an event in which Israel is both saved (Exod. 14:13, 30; 15:2) and created (Exod. 34:10; Isa. 43:1, 7, 15). Redemption is, therefore, "the divine act in and through which the forces that threaten life and creation are overcome... The effect that God intends in the act of redemption is a new creation—in the dynamic sense." Terence E. Fretheim, "The Reclamation of Creation: Redemption and Law in Exodus," *Interpretation* 45, no. 4 (October 1991): 359. However, Isaiah announces the new, eschatological Exodus greater than the original one that will bring redemption to Israel (Isa. 48:20; 52:11–12). The imagery that the prophet employs is evocative of familiar images from the first Exodus as he describes the way through the sea and the wilderness that the Lord prepares for His people (Isa. 43:16–21). Also, the visions involve scenes with lush vegetation that remind of the Garden in Eden (Isa. 41:18–20). Yet, in some passages (Isa. 51:9–11) exodus, new exodus, and creation are fused in the recollection of historical victories of the Lord over the enemies and in anticipation of redemption. See Susan R. Garrett, "Exodus from Bondage: Luke 9:31 and Acts 12:1-24," *CBQ* 52, no. 4 (October 1990): 663–64.

New Creation as a Bridge toward Eschatology

However, the New Creation was merely inaugurated by Christ, and there is still much more to come. This anticipation (2 Pet. 3:13) will become reality at the very end of history with the restoration of all things (Rev. 21:5) that will culminate with the resurrection of the saints (Rev. 20:4–6) and creation of new heavens and new earth (Rev. 21:1). All elements that were present in protology, such as the garden, the river, the tree of life, and the divine presence, are not only restored (Genesis 1–3), but their reality is even heightened. More importantly, human priestly and royal role are reestablished and finally tangible. The central point of this recreated universe is the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21–22), which represents the final destination of the restored humanity and the intersection of their and divine relationship, now brought to a qualitatively new level. In Eichrodt's words, God acts as "the perfecter of the first creation."[18]

At this point, Fesko's argument that the task of completion of creation (fruitfulness, multiplication, and dominion with the goal of expansion of the Garden in Eden to the ends of the world), which was delegated to humans but never accomplished, needs to be reiterated. Thus, he properly renders the end of Genesis 1 as both (a) prophetic, as it points forward to the future fulfillment of divine purposes, and (b) eschatological, as it finds its consummation in the new creation.[19] In other words, the new creation is the completion of the original creation, thereby bringing the solution to the problem of the unfinished world and unfulfilled divine intentions for man. Therefore, the new creation establishes a bridge between protology and eschatology.

[18] Eichrodt looks at God as separated from the cosmos and the act of creation *ex nihilo* as the ultimate expression of His freedom. However, the prophetic word indicates that the world is marred by human sin and foresees the new heaven and the new earth. This creates a tension that, as Eichrodt warns, is not based on divine inherent enmity toward the created world. On the contrary, he concludes, that God is the "perfecter of the first creation." Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 106–7.

[19] Fesko, *Last Things First*, 29–34.

Mesopotamian Precursor behind Protology and Eschatology Typology

While everything so far is related to the theological underpinnings of biblical protology and eschatology, the pressing question is whether these concepts have any precursor in the thought and custom of the ANE world?[20] Without entering into a discussion of the nature of and extent of the basic parallels between the general concepts prevalent in Mesopotamia and the Old Testament, the answer to this question is affirmative. Writing on temple ideology, Michael Hundley makes some important observations regarding the temple rebuilding practice, which often insisted on reconstructing the temples "according to the exact original specifications, 'not deviating even a finger's width' **(***ūban* **[***ana***]** *lā as*)*ê* **[***u***]** *lā erēbi***)** from the original prototype."[21] He concludes that such "antiquarian tendencies were firmly rooted in the Mesopotamian mentality, in which the way forward was back to the beginning. In Mesopotamia, creation was often viewed as the ideal, as the time when the gods ordered the world and established their terrestrial temples."[22]

As Maul clarifies, the purpose of the search for the earliest temple foundations that was performed as a part of the rebuilding procedure was in order to rid the temple of the accumulated alterations[23] and recreate the pristine state of creation.[24] This same essential point can be observed in the annual Akitu festival, when the rulers, as divinely appointed guardians of the

[20] Eichrodt properly points out that the "fact that the Israelite picture of the world has many features in common with those of the ancient Near East in general, and of Babylonia in particular, raises the question of the relationship in which the Old Testament idea of creation stands to its non-Israelite counterparts." *Theology of the Old Testament*, 113.

[21] Hundley, *Gods in Dwellings*, 78. However, this trend is relatively late.

[22] Ibid., 79.

[23] These ideas are in fact much older and can be traced to Sumerian ideology and practice. See, Hanspeter Schaudig, "Restoration of Temples in the Neo- and Late Babylonian Periods: A Royal Prerogative as the Setting for Political Argument," in *From the Foundations to the Crenellations: Essays on Temple Building in the Ancient Near East and Hebrew Bible*, ed. Mark J. Boda and Jamie Novotny (Münster, D: Ugarit Verlag, 2010), 141.

[24] Stefan M. Maul, "Walking Backwards into the Future," in *Given World and Time: Temporalities in Context*, ed. Tyrus Miller (Budapest, H; New York, NY: Central European University Press, 2008), 19.

world, recreated the triumph over the primordial chaos and renewed the resulting creation order.[25] In the same vein, the conquests of the Assyrian kings were seen as repetitions of the primordial battle with chaos, and the victories were the introduction of creation orderliness.[26] Even the contemporary successful rulers and reformers were seen as replicas of the idealized kings from the past, especially Sargon of Akkad.[27] Maul writes that the ideals and patterns for the present always had their "settled place in a long-ago age and never in the future."[28] This look forward to gazing into the past and vice versa was the most striking when it comes to language. The Sumerian/Akkadian word for future is derived from the word that signifies past, and the word for past is, likewise, derived from the word that signifies future. [29] Interestingly, the same concept can be replicated in English and illustrates the point—what lies before or in front of someone is what already happened before.

The basis for this concept was the belief that the gods created a perfect world[30] to which they provided all essentials, such as wisdom, knowledge, and skills, so that nothing new or better could be added. This original perfect state was the ideal to strive for, and all reforms in Mesopotamian societies were, therefore, intended to remove all deviations and restore the world "as had been ordered in the act of creation."[31] Maul concludes that for "Mesopotamian society the past already contained (pre-formed) all possibilities for the future, and hence its

[25] On the eschatological significance of the Akitu festival, see Edwin O. James, *Myth and Ritual in the Ancient Near East: An Archeological and Documentary Study* (New York, NY: Frederick A. Prager Publishers, 1958), 223–24.

[26] Maul, *Walking Backwards*. 21.

[27] Ibid., 21–23.

[28] Ibid. 21.

[29] Sumerian words *eger*; *murgu*; *bar* mean "behind, reverse;" the Akkadian equivalent (*w*)*arka* and its derivatives have sense of "later, afterward, future, reverse, behind." Ibid., 16.

[30] Hundley, *Gods in Dwellings*, 79.

[31] Maul, *Walking Backwards*, 20.

preoccupation with bygone mythical or historical epochs was simultaneously a preoccupation with the future."[32]

A similar attitude can be seen as paradigmatic in the Bible in terms of the eschatological accomplishment of the course set by protology. So, Genesis 1–3 is strangely a glimpse of what could have been, since the world, obviously damaged and in need of repair, remains unfinished until the eschatological crescendo in Revelation 21–22! However, unlike the general ANE cyclical concept of time marked with periodical repairs of the temples and the annual rituals of renewal, the biblical view sees time as a straight line with the absolute beginning and the final termination point. So, Currid says that "the Hebrews held to a linear history. They believed there was a beginning to time and creation (cosmogony) and a movement to a consummation (eschatology)."[33] In Neil Faulkner's words, ancient Judaism was a "highly teleological faith: it rejected the cyclical views of time which dominated pagan thought, seeing history instead as a linear progression, in which God's design gradually unfolded and his people were led towards a predetermined end."[34] Therefore, both direction and destination of the Hebrew eschatology differ greatly and stand out in comparison with the ANE, or more particularly, Mesopotamian ideas.[35]

On the other hand, the discovery of the prophetic texts from Mary and the Neo-Assyrian period[36] raises the question of the prophetic practices as well as the themes and motifs in these

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[32] Ibid., 21–22.

[33] John D. Currid, "The Hebrew World-and-Life View," in W. Andrew Hoffecker, ed., *Revolutions in Worldview: Understanding the Flow of Western Thought* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P & R, 2007), 62; so, Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary*, trans. John J. Scullion (London, GB; Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1987), 90.

[34] Neil Faulkner, *Apocalypse: The Great Jewish Revolt Against Rome AD 66-73* (Gloucestershire, GB: Tempus, 2002), 123; also, Thomas Cahill, *The Gifts of the Jews* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1998), 18–19 and 125–31.

[35] Bill T. Arnold, "Old Testament Eschatology and the Rise of Apocalypticism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology*, ed. Jerry L. Walls (Oxford, GB; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), 31–32.

[36] Martti Nissinen, *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Peter Machinist (Atlanta, GA:

writings in relation to OT prophecies. The comparative analysis of these texts indicates both similarities with the Israelite prophetic practices, forms, and content, as well as essential differences stemming primarily from the religious and social background of Israel.[37] As far as the content of the ANE and OT prophecies is concerned, regardless of the variety of shared motifs, the eschatological views and literary monumentality of Israel's prophetic compositions are unparalleled in non-biblical religions.[38] Thus, "we have at present no evidence outside of Israel for an eschatological notion of a glorious *Endzeit*, or a culminating and meliorative end to the historical process."[39]

Conclusion

This chapter proposes to address the relatedness and coordination of biblical protology and eschatology within the paradigm of creation. In the process, it was demonstrated that the Bible writers followed a four-pronged strategy for connecting the past with the future through literary, canonical, covenantal, and redemptive structures. This construct allowed the major theological ideas to progressively develop throughout the Scriptures while maintaining their course and integrity. Within this paradigm, (a) protology sets the scene that defines divine purposes that are introduced by creation; (b) eschatology anticipates the realization and consummation in the new creation of the purposes revealed in protology; and (c) creation is an ongoing divine activity. The anticipated coming reality is epitomized in the city of New Jerusalem.

Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), passim. Nicolas Wyatt, *Space and Time in the Religious Life of the Near East* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 271–99.

[37] Arnold, *Old Testament Eschatology*, 30–31.

[38] Ernst Jenni, ''Eschatology,'' IDB 2:126–33.

[39] Arnold, *Old Testament Eschatology*, 31.

Chapter 8: The City in the Biblical Eschatology

The purpose of this chapter is to present evidence that (a) the key themes and motifs from protology (creation) related to the city are integrated in eschatology (new creation); these protological concepts are, then, (b) redefined and further developed; and, finally, (c) the initial protological tensions are brought to a radical resolve. Therefore, the focus will be on the elements common to Genesis 1–11 and the Book of Revelation, especially on God, kingship, the temple, and man in Revelation 2–3, Revelation 17–18, and Revelation 21–22. The personal eschatology section that follows will be addressed in relation to the resolution of the issues brought up by the city in protology. This will provide a framework for the final comparison of the conceptions of the city in the biblical protology and eschatology and the ANE literature.

The City in Levant and Asia Minor during the Roman Empire Period

The Hellenistic period is marked by widespread urbanization in the East Mediterranean regions, especially in Asia Minor, Syria, and the Levant. The origins of the Greek and, hence, the Hellenistic polis[1] were deeply rooted in religion, as attested by Coulanges.[2] The advance of Rome did not reverse the trend but added some new elements.[3] Christianity crossed the borders

[1] Polis was more than an urban environment but first and foremost "a community of citizens." See Ralph J. Korner, "The Ekklēsia of Early Christ-Followers in Asia Minor as the Eschatological New Jerusalem: Counter-Imperial Rhetoric?" in *Urban Dreams and Realities in Antiquity: Remains and Representations of the Ancient City*, ed. Adam M. Kemezis (Leiden, NL; Boston, MA: Brill Academic Pub, 2014), 455 n.3.

[2] Fustel de Coulanges, *The Ancient City: A Study of the Religion, Laws, and Institutions of Greece and Rome*, trans. Willard Small, 3rd ed. (Boston, MA: Lee and Shepard, 1877), 167–76. Also, François de Polignac, *Cults, Territory, and the Origins of the Greek City-State*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 32–36 and 152–53.

[3] Urbanism in Judea and Galilee during the Roman era represented a mixture of different traditions and influences, such as the Judeo-Phoenician, Greek, and Roman. The members of the Herodian rulers were great builders and thoroughly Hellenized and/or Romanized; thus, their accomplishments, such as the cities along the seacoast and in other parts of their domains, reflected their attitudes. This can be particularly observed in relation to Jerusalem, which was one of the biggest and greatest cities in the Levant. However, the ideas underpinning the Greco-Roman city were very different from the ANE predecessors and informed by Greek civilizational urges, esthetics, and Roman practicality. Likewise, although the authorities were mindful of the triangle of mutual dependencies and influences between the palace, the temple, and the city, their concerns and allegiances were embedded in the provincial and imperial policies. Mogens H. Hansen, *Polis: An Introduction to the Ancient Greek City-State* (Oxford, GB; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006), 113–15 and 132–34.

of Judea, Samaria, and Galilee and spread throughout urban areas of Syria, Asia Minor, and even Greece and Rome very early. Thus, early Christianity was largely an urban religion.

The City in the Biblical Eschatology: The Book of Revelation

John's Apocalypse is a very complex work that extensively draws from OT imagery, symbols, and typology. The suggested date of composition is not determined but it could be set anywhere from before the First Jewish Revolt until the beginning of the 1st century AD.

The genre of Revelation is very unique, and various suggestions are proposed by the commentators; basically, it is an epistolary prophetic apocalypse expounded in a midrashic manner[4] and arranged liturgically.[5] It revolves around the messages directed to the "angels" of the seven churches and their congregations, which lay the foundation for the rest of the book.

Several structural models are proposed for the Apocalypse, with the whole book in view.[6] Among them, the Promise-Fulfillment parallel (Revelation 2–3 || Revelation 21–22), the city-based chiasm,[7] and the Cities of Man/Babylon/the City of God sequence are the most appealing.

The original audience of the Apocalypse is very specific; it consists of city dwellers, mostly Jewish, that share the general attitude that extols city life.[8] During the same period, the

[4] "The uniqueness of the city imagery in the Apocalypse lies in John's creative use of tradition to convey meaning." J. A. du Rand, "The Imagery of the Heavenly Jerusalem (Revelation 21:9–22:5)," *Neotestamentica* 22, no. 1 (1988): 67; also, Bruce J. Malina, *The New Jerusalem in the Revelation of John: The City as Symbol of Life with God* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 15–17.

[5] Leonard L. Thompson, *The Book of Revelation: Apocalypse and Empire* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1990), 53–73.

[6] The three most prominent are concentric, encompassing, and linguistic markers. See Pilchan Lee, *The New Jerusalem in the Book of Revelation: A Study of Revelation 21–22 in the Light of Its Background in Jewish Tradition* (Tübingen, D: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 241.

[7] (A) City of Man, Revelation 2–3, (B) Babylon Destroyed, Revelation 17–18, (A') City of God, Revelation 21–22.

[8] Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation* (Cambridge, GB; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 128. On the urban nature of early Christianity, see Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), 9–50.

vast majority of people throughout the Roman Empire lived rural lives as peasants.[9] Since the recipients were in Asia Minor at the end of the first century AD, the Christians there seem to be under threat of possible persecution, and the Apocalypse addresses their conditions and concerns.[10] However, John points out that greater danger comes from inside the church due to the improper responses of the believers to external challenges (Rev. 2:12–16, 18–24).

As he weaves the plot, John uses specific Greek and Jewish ideological/theological concepts that are expressed with the terms *ekklesia* and *polis*. In the process, he first transforms them and then fuses them in a way that creates a powerful critique of both, so that at first it "counters societal presuppositions" and later "becomes patently counter-imperial."[11] Thus, as John points out, the unjust and failing world of Roman Imperium embodied in Babylon is about to fall and be replaced with God's righteous and holy society manifested in the New Jerusalem.[12]

Protology in Eschatology

The number of protological concepts, motifs, and themes that are paralleled and elaborated on in Revelation is staggering.[13] However, the tensions and the redemptive elements set in the Genesis creation account find their resolution and are heightened in the Apocalypse

[9] Malina, *New Jerusalem*, 5; also, Bauckham, *Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 128.

[10] Colin Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting* (Sheffield, GB, 1986), 1.

[11] Korner, *Ekklēsia*, 455–56.

[12] The city has become a metonymy for its inhabitants, but in time it evolved into a metaphor for human society, and God deals with men in relation to city. This trend starts in Genesis 1–11 and blossoms fully in Revelation, where the city of New Jerusalem is referred to as the Bride and obviously consists of people. Thus, Carroll writes that he "would further want to say that in very general terms it has to be said that one of the main foci of the Hebrew Bible is its focus on 'cities' or, if you prefer, 'the city'. From city-builder Qain to Qoheleth (Eccl. 9.13–16) or from Gen. 4.17 to 2 Chron. 36.23—that is the aleph (alpha) and taw (omega) of the Hebrew Bible—the city is one of the great focalizations of the Bible, along with foci on such related topics as land and people—elements which are inevitably tied into and associated with the word-field (Wortfeld) of cities." Robert P. Carroll, "City of Chaos, City of Stone, City of Flesh: Urbanscapes in Prophetic Discourses," in *"Every City Shall Be Forsaken": Urbanism and Prophecy in Ancient Israel and the Near East*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Robert D. Haak (Sheffield, GB: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 47.

[13] See the exhaustive yet incomplete list in Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Genesis* (San Antonio, TX: Ariel Ministries, 2008), 16–17.

both theologically and canonically.[14] From a largeer perspective, Revelation (a) restores the theocentric orientation, (b) brings newness to the original creation, thereby "new", (c) God's presence is fully realized and manifested, and (d) the focal point of divine presence upon the earth is visually represented in the city, the New Jerusalem.[15] From the structural point of view, the cities/city sequence in the Apocalypse is clearly analog to the succession of the same theme in Genesis 1–11 (The City of Man → Babel), with the difference that the anticipation set in protology is now brought to the closure (The Cities of Man → Babylon the Great → The New Jerusalem).[16] The New Jerusalem fulfills the vertical and horizontal aspects of the original hope of protology because it (a) connects heaven and earth and (b) encompasses the entire earth (Rev 21:16).[17] Moreover, it becomes the "symbol and centre of the New Creation."[18]

The City in Revelation 2–3: The Cities of Man

Letters to the Dwellers of the Cities

The seven churches in the seven cities in Asia (Revelation 2–3) and their different yet similar circumstances together give an overview of the challenges that the early Christians faced in their urban environs and the general state of the Church at that time. Some of the most urgent to note were the false teachings (Rev. 2:14), the idolatry and debauchery (Rev. 2:14, 21) creeping in the congregations, the apathy taking over the believers (Rev. 3:1), the opposition from the synagogue (Rev. 2:8–19; 3:7–9), and a case of martyrdom (Rev. 2:13). Every address to a church is formulaic; it consists of recognition of its situation, which is followed with words of

[14] Mark B. Stephens, "Creation and New Creation in the Book of Revelation," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Book of Revelation*, ed. Craig Koester (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020), 258.

[15] Ibid., 265–268.

[16] For the open-ended structure of Genesis and the Pentateuch, see Sailhamer, *Pentateuch as Narrative*, 35–37; also, Sailhamer, *Meaning of the Pentateuch*, 233–44.

[17] Stephens, *Creation and New Creation*, 268.

[18] Dumbrell, *End of the Beginning*, 1.

admonition, exhortation, and promises for its endurance, persistence, and faithfulness. Some of these promises contain both protological and eschatological elements merged together. However, the fulfillment of the divine commitments related to the New Jerusalem and the associated motifs (Rev. 2:7; 3:12) are projected into the eschatological future (Revelation 20–21).

The cities in Revelation 2–3 represent a cluster of seven prominent economic, political, and religious centers on the main highway in the Roman province of Asia. The biggest and most important was Ephesus, with its enormous temple dedicated to the goddess Diana, and, due to its diversity, was known as a *cosmopolis*. All seven cities were quite well established, safe, rich, and full of opportunities for an opulent and prosperous life. The Christians in the seven churches were not simply the residents but also the citizens of these cities.[19] As such, they were entitled to some rights, privileges, and legal protection.[20] The pressure to join and participate in the local and empire-wide polytheistic cults and worship was high. Religion, politics, culture, and economy were all blended together and insoluble, making them very difficult to dismiss and avoid.[21] Moreover, in Roman cosmology, the emperor had a vital and indispensable role in maintaining peace and the world order.[22] Abstaining from or rejecting the worship of the emperor, as these cities were known supporters of the emperor's cult, was tantamount to high treason with severe consequences.[23] However, persecutions instigated by the other groups, such

[19] Modern man does not understand what living in a city meant to the ancients. It was more than being at a certain location or having physical protection behind the bulwarks and walls. It meant identity, belonging, acceptance, association, and a healthy measure of legal and political rights and security. However, during the Roman Empire, every citizen of a polis owed a dual allegiance, one to his city and another to the city of Rome. It is often taken lightly that Rome was a city-state that stretched its boundaries very far in every direction, thus becoming a territorial state. But not all subjects were automatically Roman citizens.

[20] Hemer, *Letters to the Seven Churches*, 38.

[21] Ibid., 52; so, Bauckham, *Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 17.

[22] Stephens, *Creation and New Creation*, 261.

[23] See John E. Stanley, "The New Creation as a People and City in Revelation 21:1-22:5: An Alternative to Despair," *ATJ* 60, no. 2 (2005): 28.

as the synagogue members, were simply tolerated by the government, while oppression coming from city officials was institutionalized. Thus, being a Christian came with a price.[24]

The context of the messages to the churches hints at the general openness toward Greco-Roman pagan society, its culture, and the way of life. This stance led the Christians tolerate the attitudes and practices that were on the verge of compromising even the fundamentals, such as the prohibition of idol worship. Thus, John's tenor is emphatically directed against any unnecessary participation in society, even withdrawal from it, as corrupted and degrading.[25]

Not a single one of the seven cities is directly addressed, especially not in a derogatory way; yet, everything said depicts "the ambiguity of living as God's people in man-made cities."[26] Then again, the lack of any positive designation at least points to divine indifference toward human's designs. However, this low-key criticism gradually becomes more pronounced; even "the great city," Jerusalem, is deliberately addressed as Sodom and Egypt (Rev 11:8), which effectively presents city in its archetypal sense in opposition to the people of God,[27] and is therefore rejected. The two appellations mentioned evoke important motifs of divine wrath and destruction, with the latter alluding to the experience of the new Exodus.

The seven churches, or the church at large, eventually develop into one place, a city that transforms into one people, the New Jerusalem.[28] On the other hand, the seven cities, the epitome of the Greco-Roman polis,[29] develop into one city too; this urban image becomes more and more

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[24] Leonard L. Thompson, "Ordinary Lives: John and His First Readers," in *Reading the Book of Revelation: A Resource for Students*, ed. David L. Barr (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 41.

[25] Thompson, *Book of Revelation*, 194; also, Stephens, *Creation and New Creation*, 262; so, Bauckham, *Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 128.

[26] Gordon W. Campbell, "Antithetical Feminine-Urban Imagery and a Tale of Two Women-Cities in the Book of Revelation," *TB* 50, no. 1 (2004): 85.

[27] Ibid., 87.

[28] Korner, *Ekklēsia*, 455–56.

[29] They are "more than that they are just historical entities, functioning in a political and theological

explicit until it becomes a fully developed metaphor—"Babylon the Great" (Rev. 17:5).

The City in Revelation 17–18: Babylon the Great

The imagery in Revelation 17 corresponds closely to the actual physical and historical description of the city of Rome.[30] The picture of a woman seated on the beast represents the religious and royal aspects on which the state rested and their role in influencing its constituents (Rev. 17:2; 18:2). But Rome is also the heir, the continuator, and the summit of ancient paganism and its worldview. In this aspect, it is the avatar of Babylon and a trope for evil and corruption.[31]

Babylon the Great is addressed in three oracles (Rev. 18:10, 16, 19), which describe her in extremely negative terms that are antithetical to the Scriptural ideal city, which is to be revealed shortly after. Yet, the identity of Babylon is more complex since she is the city/woman, as seen in Revelation 17.[32] The picture of the woman is telling; she is the embodiment of prosperity, opulence, and kingship but, also, arrogance, immorality, and violence (Rev. 17:3–6). Her seat on the seven-headed dragon indicates her close association with the imperial power and reliance on it (Rev. 17:3, 7–13).

However, the majority of the things that can be learned about Babylon the Great come from her negative easements given through her commercial losses, which portray economy[33] of

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allegory." Du Rand, *Heavenly Jerusalem*, 68.

[30] It should not be forgotten that Rome was a city that poured forth its borders and spread throughout the entire known world at that time. Regardless of being a republic or a monarchy, the Roman rule of the conquered lands was essentially military. The governors of the provinces were imposed by Rome and were military commanders of either legions or militias, while the garrisons dotted the landscape. Getting under Roman rule did not transfer or establish Roman citizenship over the included populace. Thus, the Roman Empire was a city of enormous size! After Clifford Ando, "The Administration of the Provinces," in *A Companion to the Roman Empire*, ed. David S. Potter (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 177–92.

[31] Rome replicates materialism and religion symbiosis, just as it was in the early ANE world.

[32] Both city and woman, in their intrinsic aspects, represent communities, either in a positive or negative stance toward God. See Edith M. Humphrey, "A Tale of Two Cities and (At Least) Three Women: Transformation, Continuity, and Contrast in the Apocalypse," in *Reading the Book of Revelation: A Resource for Students*, ed. David L. Barr (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 83.

[33] For the critical notes on the Roman economy, see Richard Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy: Studies on*

the Empire as aimed at insatiable, vain, and superfluous luxury (Rev. 18:9–19).[34] Ironically, it is the senseless exploitation and abuse of both man and nature to satisfy human vanity that made Babylon a metropolis. Her self-deification, idolatry, and worship of wealth, power, grandeur, and technology make her a parody of the ideal city she pretends to be.[35] But Rome is an ephemeral phenomenon, and her judgment comes swiftly (Rev. 18:2, 8).

The Fall of Babylon in Revelation 18 is figuratively related to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Rev. 18:9) and the destruction of the primordial world in the Flood (Rev. 18:21). Likewise, the motif and theme of the new Exodus are reflected in the call to God's people to leave Babylon (Rev. 18:4).[36] Although Babylon is a symbol of universal humanity in rebellion against God,[37] this detail alludes to her spatiality and, thus, indicates that the boundary between a community and a locality in Revelation is fluid.[38] Thus, the call to come out[39] implies the invitation to go to the Promise Land, which is the coming New Jerusalem.[40]

The City in Revelation 21–22: The New Jerusalem

The temporal aspects of the earthly Jerusalem, accented in Revelation 11:8, are

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the Book of Revelation (Edinburgh, UK: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2000), 338–83.

[34] Thomas E. Schmidt, "'And the Sea Was No More': Water as People, Not Place," in *To Tell the Mystery: Essays on New Testament Eschatology in Honor of Robert H. Gundry*, ed. Thomas E. Schmidt and Moisés Silva (Sheffield, GB: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 236.

[35] James L. Resseguie, *Revelation Unsealed: A Narrative Critical Approach to John's Apocalypse* (Leiden, NL; Boston, MA: Brill, 1998), 74–45.

[36] The Exodus typology is clearly set in the future open passage in Exodus 15:14–17 and in the fourth Balaam's prophecy in Numbers 24:8–9, 14–18, which leans on the Song of Moses. Isaiah and other prophets continue along the same lines, announcing the New Exodus, which is greater than the first one (Isa. 11:15–16; 35; 40:3–5; 41:17–20; 42:14–16; 43:1–3, 14–21; 48:20–21; 49:8–12; 51:9–11; 52:3–6, 11–12; 55:12–13; Jer. 16:14–15; 23:4–8; Hos. 2:14–15; 11:1; 12:9, 13; 13:4–5). See Richard M. Davidson, "The Eschatological Hermeneutic of Biblical Typology," *TheoRhēma* 6, no. 2 (2011): 32–34.

[37] Resseguie, *Revelation Unsealed*, 74–75 and 77–78.

[38] Humphrey, *Tale of Two Cities*, 90.

[39] In spiritual geography, to come out is to separate oneself and overcome the world. T. E. Schmidt, *Sea Was No More*, 237.

[40] Bauckham, *Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 129.

superseded by the coming of the eschatological realities embodied in the heavenly New Jerusalem, a city without the temple, cult, and resemblance to the cities of this world. The attributes of this city that are consistently compared to and expressed in anthropic terms[41] do not necessarily mean that the physical city is nonexistent. Regardless, the text in Revelation 21:1–22:5 is highly symbolic, and it rather describes God's dwelling place in the saints than a localized place[42] where the saints live forever.[43] Yet, the city does not simply represent the community of faith or the church, but a society of perfected believers.[44] This society stands in contrast to the churches in Revelation 2–3, since it is purged of all vices and falsehoods that characterized them under the dresses of the ungodly and wicked pagan environment (Rev. 21:27).

The new earth is not dominated anymore by Satan (Rev. 20:10) and Babylon (Rev. 18:2). The elements of the old earth, such as sickness, persecutions, death, sorrows, and tears, are not there any longer (Rev. 21:4). They are replaced with joy, happiness, and festivity, hinted at in the Lamb's wedding feast (Rev. 19:7–9). Likewise, life bursts in this city since there is a fountain of water in it that turns into a river (Rev. 22:1). Instead of one tree of life, as it was in the Garden, there are multiple trees that bring fruit yearlong; even their leaves are beneficial (Rev. 22:2).

Formerly disowned and dispossessed saints belong to the new earth and the new city. Their poverty on this earth is replaced with the imperishable inheritance of the new earth. The

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[41] The New Jerusalem is thoroughly anthropomorphous—its measurements (Rev. 21:17), the very structure (Rev. 21:12–14), and the likening (Rev. 19:8, 14; 21:2, 9–10) are given in relation to man.

[42] J. Richard Middleton, "A New Heaven and a New Earth: The Case for a Holistic Reading of the Biblical Story of Redemption," JCTR, no. 11 (2006): 92; also, Robert H. Gundry, "The New Jerusalem: People as Place, Not Place for People," *NT* 29, no. 3 (1987): 256. For differing views, see David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc, 1998), 1122; so, Bauckham, *Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 136–40.

[43] The New Jerusalem is personified as it appears in the promise of Jesus to write down His, the Father's, and the city's names on the forehead of the victorious believer (Rev. 3:12). Likewise, the "beloved city" is paralleled to "the camp of the saints," which is of enormous size (Rev 20:9). The most explicit place connecting people and the New Jerusalem is found in Rev. 21:2–3, where the city is called "the bride, the wife of the Lamb. Moreover, the believers are God's "dwelling place... the earthly part of the new universe." After Gundry, *New Jerusalem*, 256–57.

[44] It is in this aspect that the city reflects the divine glory that is given in epiphanic terms (Rev. 21:11), since the context clearly points to God's presence in people who participate in His nature (Rev. 21:27).

riches associated with the New Jerusalem are not necessarily immaterial or purely symbolic. However, the attitude of the citizens, in contrast to Babylon, is not driven by greed and oppression. They live in buildings made of precious stones and tread the streets of gold, which indicates a very different set of values (Rev. 21:18–21).

The new economic realities are matched with the new political realities, too. The New Jerusalem's width and length cover an area larger of the then known world, thus absorbing all the kingdoms (Rev. 21:16).[45] Yet the nations are now redeemed and "walk by her light" (Rev. 21:24). They comprise the kings and the priests on the new earth who pay their allegiance and tribute to God dwelling in the city (Rev. 21:24–26). The ideal of the Garden for humankind is, thus, restored in image, function, and association with God (Rev. 22:3–5).

The New Jerusalem is not a preexisting city waiting to descend; it is the most prominent and most important part of the new creation. Her coming from heaven indicates her divine design and designates her as a reflection of the heavenly realities. Likewise, the adjective "new" in the city's name is there to distinguish it from the old, earthly Jerusalem. Moreover, it is not a city of stone and mortar but is made of resurrected believers.[46] The city is secure; it is positioned on an unapproachably high mountain (Rev. 21:10) and protected with enormously high and thick walls, with the gates guarded with angels (Rev. 21:12–14).

The astronomically large numbers related to the city's size point to an immense number of the saved peoples from all nations (Rev. 21:15–17). Its cube shape, which alludes to the Most Holy Place, strengthens the understanding that the saints are God's dwelling place (Rev. 21:16). The city's enormous height reaches into the heavens, thus indicating the merger of the heavenly

[45] David Mathewson, *A New Heaven and a New Earth: The Meaning and Function of the Old Testament in Revelation 21.1–22.5* (London, GB; New York, NY: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 109.

[46] Ibid., 218.

and earthly realms (Rev. 21:16). Since it resembles the inner sanctum that is filled with the divine presence, the whole city reflects the glory of God (Rev. 21:11). Consequently, there is no physical sanctuary because God and the Lamb are in the saints, and the saints are in them (Rev. 21:3). Usually, an ANE deity lives in the temple that is situated in the city; however, this image is completely reversed in the Revelation because the city is absorbed in the temple.

The New Creation and the New Jerusalem

Redemption and creation are two closely related concepts, as can be repeatedly seen in the Bible, most notably in the New Testament.[47] The final redemptive act is the resurrection (Rev. 20:4–6), which is followed by the creation of the new universe (Rev. 21:5). This new creation largely resembles the original state of the primeval earth before sin and the Flood. However, it is not a simple return to the past but much more, as Middleton aptly observes:

> …redemption is... the move from creation to eschaton as movement from a garden (in Genesis 2) to a city (in Revelation 21–22). Redemption does not reverse, but rather embraces, historical development. The transformation of the initial state of the earth into complex human societies is not part of the fall, but rather the legitimate creational mandate of humanity.[48]

Thus, the incorporation of the human need for a structured community that exceeds the basic family into the new cosmos points to the keen divine interest in the totality of human life, which was present from the beginning[49] as a part of the original design and the anticipated outcome.[50]

Though the New Jerusalem belongs to the new cosmology, nothing has changed in the attitude toward the city, which was already set in protology. Thus, the city is not described as preexisting outside of the creation on a cosmic mountain; quite the opposite, it comes with the

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[47] Frank D. Macchia, "Justification Through New Creation: The Holy Spirit and the Doctrine by Which the Church Stands or Falls," *TT* 58, no. 2 (July 2001): 207–11.

[48] Middleton, *Holistic Reading of the Biblical Story*, 76.

[49] Ibid., 77.

[50] Ibid., 93.

new creation as its part. It descends on an unknown mountain, elevated high, so it can be light to the world, not its navel. Consequently, it is not a center of creation but a divine provision that is intended to bring the divine and the human together. Likewise, there is no theomachy; order and peace on the new earth are established not through violence but by the coming of the heavenly city. All inhabitants of the New Jerusalem are the kings (*imago dei*, Rev. 21:7), and thus, their mandate is to promote order by peace, not by force (*imitatio dei*, Rev. 21:23–24).

The New Creation, the New Jerusalem, Babylon the Great, and the OT Prophets

There are several passages in the writings of OT prophets related to Jerusalem and its future that are closely followed or alluded to in Revelation, particularly in chs. 21–22.[51] These oracles deal with various aspects of the coming salvation;[52] however, the most direct and clearest is the passage in Isaiah 65, where the notion of a "new" Jerusalem appears first.

Isaiah 65 announces the creation of "new heavens and the new earth" (Isa. 65:17–25); Jerusalem appears as a part of this new divine design and its origination is explicitly referred to as God's act (Isa. 65:18). This new creation stands in contrast with הצרות הראשנות in Isaiah 65:16, which Isaiah 65:17 reiterates simply as הראשנות, and this new situation is characterized by joy, gladness, and rejoicing as well as the absence of weeping and crying (Isa. 65:18–19). Therefore, the prophet announces a bright future that extends over and beyond the sufferings and troubles of the "former" days or the "first" things, tacitly projecting the time yet to come as the "last" things.

However, the promises are given within the larger context of the Isaiah 65 where the

[51] Such as Isa. 52:1; 54:11–12; 60; Ezek. 40:2–5; 47:1–12; 48:30–34; Zech. 14:6–21. See Bauckham, *Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 136. Likewise, Hag. 2:1–9; Zech. 8:1–8; Ezek. 40–48; Isa 65:17–25, per Mark B. Stephens, *Annihilation or Renewal?: The Meaning and Function of New Creation in the Book of Revelation* (Tübingen, D: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 232.

[52] Thus, prophecies in Ezekiel 40–48, concerning the coming eschatological temple, anticipate the rebuilding of Jerusalem. See Steven J. Friesen, *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John: Reading Revelation in the Ruins* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006), 142.

oracles interchangeably address the wicked (Isa. 65:1–7, 11–12, 14–15) and the righteous in Israel (Isa. 65:8–10, 13–14, 15–16). These two groups are addressed as the "seekers" (Isa. 65:10) and, by extension, the "nonseekers" of the Lord. And while the judgment and destruction are pronounced over the disobedient "nonseekers," the assurances of a future salvation are extended only to the obedient servants of the Lord (Isa 65:13–16).

The common scholarly opinion is that the words in Isaiah 65 postdate the destruction of Jerusalem and, thus, are directed to the exiles during the Babylonian dispersion and offer comfort to the Jewish people during a time of great national distress.[53] Thus, large segments of Isaiah 65 resonate well with certain passages in Jeremiah's oracles to the exiles of Judah in Babylon; however, not as affirmation but, seemingly, as the reversal of Jeremiah's prophecies of gloom and a prolonged stay in Babylon.[54] So, Isaiah 65:21–23, which envisions new life in the view of the newly created Jerusalem, stands in sharp contrast with the passage in Jeremiah 29:4–6 that calls for adaptation to the reality of the exilic life in Babylon.

Yet, there is no sense of tension in Isaiah regarding this apparent transposition of the nation's future. The reason is obvious: Jeremiah addresses the present realities of the exiles and the remnant in the land of Israel, while Isaiah speaks about the distant future.[55] This future is set at the time of the restoration of the complete universe, which will affect both heaven and earth (Isa. 65:17). The establishment of the proper environment will usher in the creation of the "new" Jerusalem as the right place for God's people. So, the "old" city that is, according to Isaiah, burdened with violence, wickedness, injustice, and unrighteousness (Isa. 1:21–23) is left behind

[53] On peculiarities of the historic and literary context of Isaiah 65, see Stephens, *Annihilation or Renewal*, 23–24.

[54] Benjamin D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40-66* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 42-43.

[55] Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press, 1969), 405.

among the "former things." This new Jerusalem is described in terms corresponding to (a) the ideal life in the protological Garden (Gen. 3:14–15) and the changed nature of the earth (Isa. 65:25); (b) the reestablished divine presence (Isa. 65:2) and communication with God (Isa. 65:24);[56] and (c) the removal of the power of evil (Isa. 65:25) and, consequently, the effects of the curse.[57] However, the oracle in Isaiah 65:17–25 extends to the end Isaiah 66, thereby widening the array of divine assurances.

The parallel place in Isaiah 11:6–9, which contains an almost identical description of this paradisiacal environment, is given within the context of the prophecy of the coming of the Messiah. In light of this important designation, the creation of the new Jerusalem is sequential to the fulfilled ministry of Christ that ushers in and results in a new world that looks like a replica of the original creation of Genesis 1–3.[58] Thus, the eschatological hope is integrated with the protological ideal in Isaiah's prophecy.

The text is clear that the physical location and characteristics of this new city are not the concern of Isaiah but its changed nature. The "infrastructure of the city will be marked by peace, justice, righteousness, and faithfulness,"[59] as is highlighted in Isaiah 1:26–27. Thus, the essence of the new city is a new society without oppression and violence, thus with longevity, security, stability, and joy (Isa. 65:19–24). Moreover, since the new heavens and the new earth will remain before God, per the oracle in Isaiah 66:22, everything that belongs to the new creation will remain, including the New Jerusalem and everything it stands for. Essentially, Isaiah 65

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[56] John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 661.

[57] Stephens, *Annihilation or Renewal*, 29.

[58] Schmid points out that Isaiah 65 is an extension of the prayers in Isaiah 63:7–64:11 which constantly allude to the beginning. See Konrad Schmid, "New Creation Instead of New Exodus. The Innerbiblical Exegesis and Theological Transformations of Isaiah 65:17 – 25," in *Continuity and Discontinuity: Chronological and Thematic Development in Isaiah 40-66*, ed. Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer and Hans M. Barstad (Göttingen, D; Bristol, CT: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 178.

[59] Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 247.

announces the completion of the original creation design that commenced in Genesis 1–11 and is now epitomized and localized in the city of New Jerusalem. In words of Goldingay,

> The new Jerusalem will be like a microcosm of a new cosmos. It will be as if Yhwh has determined to undo all that went wrong about the original creation and start again, not with a new paradise garden but with a new garden city, a place that is a joy to Yhwh and a joy to its people. History will be over and creation's purpose will be realized.[60]

Another result of Isaiah's reversal of Jeremiah's prophecy in Jeremiah 29:4–6 is that is sets the future Jerusalem directly against the contemporary and the future Babylon. The prophecy in Isaiah 65:17–25 is literary related to the oracle in Isaiah 43:16–21, which, speaking about return of the exiles of Judah and Israel from among the nations does it in terms of the old and new exodus.[61] However, Isaiah 65–66 extends that prophecy in terms of (a) the old and new creation; (b) the inclusion of the chosen from among the nations to the people of God; and (c) the transposition of the present redemption to the future, eschatological and universal salvation. Therefore, Babylon is, within this context, seen as a future reality that God's people will have to face again and to experience a new, greater exodus that will deliver them from her (Isa. 48:20).

The transformation of Babylon in Isaiah from a friend to a foe (Isaiah 39) that should be judged with all enemies of Israel (Isaiah 13) progresses to the point at which Babylon becomes the embodiment of the present (Isaiah 29) and then the universal eschatological enemy of God's people (Isaiah 48). A similar trend is observable in Jeremiah, where Babylon is first seen as a kind of a refuge for the exiles of Judah (Jeremiah 29) only to become the enemy of God after destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.[62] However, the judgement of Babylon in Jeremiah

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[60] John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. 2: Israel's Faith, 3 vols. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 461–462. Likewise, Goldingay writes that the eschatological end is "dominated by the theme of restoration, renewal and the fulfillment of that creation project." Ibid., 505.

[61] Schmid, *New Creation*, 179–80.

[62] Friesen, *Imperial Cults*, 139–40.

displays great affinities with Isaiah 48, thus hinting at eschatological future (Jeremiah 50–51).[63]

One more aspect of the eschatological judgment of the city has to be considered. The prophets that address the political and existential troubles and the exile situation of Juda and Israel speak about the coming judgment on various nations that have afflicted harm to the people of God. These enemies are often metaphorically represented by the capitals of their kingdoms. However, as these prophecies escalate, two cities emerge as the embodiments of all the evils of Israel's foes. Thus, Babylon, with its political and military power, and Tyre, with its economic prosperity, become distinguished and emblematic. Ezekiel specifically delivers a condemnation of Tyre for filling up the trade vacuum created by the destruction of Jerusalem, thus undercutting the ability of Judah to recover. The predictions found in Ezekiel 26–28 are the prelude to a distinctly eschatological section in Ezekiel 38–39, which expand on them.[64] Moreover, Ezekiel 28 displays strong similarities to Isaiah 65, but it also uses language and imagery from Genesis 1–3 (Ezek. 28:1–19). These two cities, Babylon and Tyre,[65] in Revelation merge into one—Rome,[66] in which both attributes, political and economic, find their manifestation.[67] Thus, the OT oracles of the judgment and destruction of these cities serve as a prophetic double entrée; they announce the end of tyrannical rule of the past oppressive kingdoms and anticipate the

[63] Compare Isa. 48:20 and Jer. 51:45.

[64] Daniel I. Block, *Beyond the River Chebar: Studies in Kingship and Eschatology in the Book of Ezekiel* (Cambridge, UK: James Clarke & Co, 2014), 105.

[65] "Babylon: Isa. 13:1-14:23; 21:1-10; 47; Jer 25:12-38; 50-51. Tyre: Isa.23; Ezek. 26-28." Bauckham, *Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 5.

[66] "Rome is called 'Babylon' because its godless claim to universal rule corresponds to the tower of Babel, and because in 70 AD Rome destroyed the city and temple of God, as neo-Babylon had done once before, in 587 BC… The tower of Babel was the attempt of godless human beings to storm heaven. The city of God, in contrast, comes down from heaven to earth, and out of grace fulfils the wish of human beings for God's presence." Jurgen Moltmann, *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London, UK: SCM Press, 1996), 311–12.

[67] Bauckham, *Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 35–36.

eschatological destruction of their heir Rome (Isa.21:9; Jer. 51:8; Ezek. 28:18 || Rev. 18:2).[68] Moreover, since Babylon/Rome stands for *urbs universalis*, the "fall of the great city becomes a symbol for the relativization of all human tyranny in the face of the manifestation of divine justice."[69]

The City and the Temple

There is no temple in New Jerusalem because God does not need either a personal residence to live on earth or a mediating ground.[70] Instead, He lives in the city, which is a metaphor for His people who live in Him.[71] The temple, as a corporate building, already appears in the Gospels and especially in the Epistles, where it is implied that God's presence resides in both Jesus and the church, thereby dispensing with a physical location.[72] Following that line of thought, the temple is now situated in God and the Lamb (Rev. 21:22).

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[68] Bauckham, *Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 153.

[69] Gilbertson, *God and History*, 198.

[70] Unlike the ANE theology with its idea of the avatar presence of a god in their statue within the context of sharp distinction between the divine and human realms, God's presence in New Jerusalem is imminent and tangible, not tokenish. The border between the heaven and the earth is suspended, and both realms seem, if not merged together, heave at least interpenetrated. This merger of the realms is already hinted to in Chapters 4–5 and the ensuing heavenly liturgy that has both the angelic and the human participants taking part. But now, this merger is not limited to the temple situation and the worship; instead, the whole city is permeated with the divine presence in an essentially heavenized environment. The throne of God, which was in heaven, is now in the city, which is described in terms of the Sanctuary. Thus, the border between the city and the temple is removed, and they merge into one. Divine splendor and human culture, now dedicated to God's glory, coexist in the way that makes God "all in all" (1 Cor 15:28). Bauckham, *Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 141. The previous setting of the heavenly throne room was the scene of the concentric circles of the courtiers and restricted access to God (Rev 22:4). In New Jerusalem, all redeemed people are kings and priests with free access to God, and they serve Him (Rev 22:3) and reign with Him (Rev 22:5). Therefore, God's courtroom, unlike the ANE divine courtrooms, does not consist of various deities that confer their power and authority on Him but of people with whom He freely shares His power. Thus, Bauckham concludes that "God's kingdom theonomy (God's rule) and human autonomy (self-determination) will fully coincide." Ibid., 143.

[71] Stephen Pattemore, *The People of God in the Apocalypse: Discourse, Structure and Exegesis* (Cambridge, GB; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 199–200.

[72] Max Botner, "A Sanctuary in the Heavens and the Ascension of the Son of Man: Reassessing the Logic of Jesus' Trial in Mark 14.53–65," *JSNT* 41, no. 3 (March 2019): 312–13; also, Stanley, 31–32. "This portrayal of Christ-followers as a living sanctuary has precedents outside of the New Testament. The sectarians at Qumran not only self-portrayed as the fictive foundation of a polis, but also as the Jewish Temple. In 1QS and CD the sect refers to themselves as 'a holy house.'" Korner, *Ekklēsia*, 487–88. Also, Dumbrell, *End of the Beginning*, 37.

That God is simultaneously present in the city and in the heavens is taken as granted, since this belief is part of the theological heritage of Israel.[73] Still, this reality is symbolically expressed in the height of the city that is penetrating into heaven (Rev. 21:16). In this sense, the heavenly Temple and the New Jerusalem permeate each other and share some attributes and cultic functions, such as the pilgrimage and the tribute center (Rev. 21:24).[74] At the same time, by "living" in the heavenly-earthly city, God is both transcendent and immanent.

Such a vision of the New Jerusalem resonates with Jewish prophetic, ANE, and Hellenistic concepts of the ideal city and, thus, appeals to all sentiments.[75] Moreover, the Jewish and the Greco-Roman ideals are not in conflict; the former longs for the lasting divine presence and the latter for the continuation of civilization, its culture, and society.[76] Still, the hopes and ambitions of Christians "are not to be found in the hopes and aspirations provided by the ideal Hellenistic city, or Rome or Babylon," but in "the New Jerusalem of biblical prophecy."[77]

The City and Kingship

God's kingdom is established after the victory over the opposition (Rev. 12:10) and confirmed immediately before the coming of the new creation (Rev. 20:11). Thus, the primary kingship in Revelation is attributed to God, and this theme is repeatedly reiterated in various ways. From the liturgical point of view, God's kingship in its respective aspects is the central theme of the hymns (Revelation 4–5) and songs (Revelation 7, 1–12, 14–18, and 19). Yet it is not ascribed to God in absolute terms but in conjunction with the Lamb (Rev. 5:6–8; 7:17; 22:1,

[73] Othmar Keel, T*he Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms*, trans. Timothy J. Hallett (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 26–27.

[74] Mathewson, *New Heaven and a New Earth*, 219–24.

[75] Bauckham, *Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 135.

[76] Mathewson, *New Heaven and a New Earth*, 231–32.

[77] Ibid., 232–33.

3), with a measure of power delegated to the redeemed humanity (Rev. 2:26–27; 3:21; 22:5).

This resonates in harmony with the protological model expressed in the *imago dei* concept (Gen. 1:26–28). In Revelation, it is reiterated in the notions of βασιλείαν or a "kingdom" in its collective aspect and in ἱερεῖς or "priests" regarding the individual position, which appear at the beginning (Rev. 1:6) and the end of the Apocalypse (Rev. 20:6). However, the priestly role is confined to λατρεία (Rev. 22:3 || Rev. 7:15), which rather stands for "worship" in general than sacrificial duties.

It is important to observe that both ἐκκλησία and πόλις are politically charged terms that are embedded in the idea of democracy.[78] The New Jerusalem is the outcome of the transformation of the church into the city, now comprised of kings and priests within a theocentric society. Within this paradigm, the New Jerusalem is the symbol of government and the center for the governed, and as such, she "asserts the fact of final Kingdom of God rule, combining people, place, and divine presence."[79] The essential equality of her constituents could suggest some kind of joint decision-making. But the rule of the royal priesthood is contingent on the rule of and with the Lamb; this, in turn, implies synergy both vertically and horizontally, though, under God as the supreme king and the source of the kingship (Rev 2:26; 3:21). This concept is already present in the protological expectation of full human cooperation and compliance, as implied by *imago dei* (Gen. 1:26–27). Then again, the rule of the Messiah and the apostles is, essentially, not the spatial but the rule over God's people, which, together with the conciliar practice of the Apostolic Church (Acts 15), points to a form of family-based structure.

[78] Korner, *Ekklēsia*, 458–83.

[79] Dumbrell, *End of the Beginning*, 31. So, *Bauckham, Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 132.

The New Jerusalem as an Alternative to the City of Man

The Garden and the New Jerusalem as the embodiments of the protological and eschatological realities are united (Rev. 22:1–5),[80] the human society and the divine order with its focus on the "walk with God," of which the fundamental consequence is *imitatio dei* (Gen. 3:8–9 reflected in Gen. 5:22–24 and ingeminated in Rev. 21:24). Thus, the type of the new civilization in Revelation 21–22 is of the "'walkers' with God" (i.e., Rev. 19:10), not of the city-builders.[81]

John employing the Greco-Roman civic terminology and the exposition on the New Jerusalem are not haphazard but in accordance with the Early Church kerygma (Gal. 4:26; Phil. 3:20; Eph. 2:19; Heb. 11:10, 16; 12:22; 13:14); thus, the expectation of translation of ἐκκλησία into the corporeal New Jerusalem[82] was a common point. Some very similar ideas were already present in the Judaism of the Second Temple period, both in Judea and the diaspora.[83] Interestingly, the political theory of some of the contemporary pagan Greco-Roman philosophers represented the ideal human society, even the whole universe as a city;[84] but, never at the magnitude of the Apocalypse and not based on the same ethical and ideological premises. Thus, the spatial size of the New Jerusalem encompasses the whole earth (Rev. 21:16) and thereby implies a territorial state that incorporates and eclipses even Rome and the whole οἰκουμένη, the world dominated by her. On the other hand, its height is so great that it unites and merges the

[80] The "New Jerusalem is at once paradise, holy city and temple." Bauckham, *Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 132.

[81] Likewise, the family structure is still preserved and contained in the notion of kinship under the Father within the larger social structure embodied in the city.

[82] Korner, *Ekklēsia*, 487–89.

[83] Qumran's 4Q Pesher on Isaiah 54:11 (4QpIsd, 4Q164), *The Description of the New Jerusalem*, Temple Scroll (11QT), and Book 5 of the Sibylline Oracles, etc.

[84] Korner, *Ekklēsia*, 483–84.

heaven and the earth. By these horizontal and vertical measures and their implications, as well as through trans-local religion-based citizenry, the New Jerusalem essentially differs from the Greek and, therefore, Roman concept of polis. In effect, this theological point of the Apocalypse had and still has enormous bearing on Christian practice,[85] as well as polity and politics, with historical witness of the positive outcomes, [86] as well as repercussions.

Personal Eschatology in Revelation

There is an intrinsic connection and similarity between resurrection and the new creation, since the resurrection of the body is part of the cosmic restoration.[87] Resurrection is a unique divine creation act intended to (a) reverse the de-creation caused by Adam's sin and terminate its effects; (b) restore life as the primary creation design; (c) fulfill the original creation intent for man as a divine image; and (d) establish a foundation for the new humanity that would be able to accomplish its purpose. As such, the resurrection is the final step of salvation and one of the focal points of the new creation. However, Revelation is not interested in the mode of resurrection but in the return of the dead believers to the realm of the living.[88] In other words, the New Jerusalem is the place that the dead inhabit after the resurrection and the judgement.[89] The idea of bodily resurrection stands in sharp contrast to the ANE beliefs, as it can be clearly seen in *The Death of Gilgamesh* version from Me-Turan (Segment A) that explicitly and repeatedly states, "Lord Gilgameš has lain down and is never to rise again."[90] It was even more abhorrent to

[85] J. Richard Middleton, *A New Heaven and a New Earth: Reclaiming Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 37–55.

[86] For practical aspects of this reality, see Stark, *Cities of God*, passim.

[87] Gregory K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 1040–41.

[88] After Richard Bauckham, *The Fate of the Dead: Studies on Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (Leiden, NL; Boston, MA: Brill, 1998), 275 and 289,

[89] Ibid., 82–83.

[90] ETCSL 1.8.1.3.

the Greek philosophy-saturated worldviews of the Roman era that maintained the same ANE dichotomy between the realms.[91] However, the biblical vision of humanity is not two separate societies comprised of the living and the dead, which inhabit two distinctive and unbridgeable domains or cities, but a unified family made of the resurrected and transformed humanity in New Jerusalem, in the land of the living. On a very practical level, resurrection is a reversal of injustices by which the believers had been affected in their lives and then died (Rev. 6:9–11). Thus, the resurrection of the dead and their positioning on God's throne with the Lamb is the fulfillment of the kingship, as purported by the *imago dei* concept in protology.[92]

Conclusion

The intention of this chapter was to explore the themes from protology (creation) related to the city and the way eschatology (new creation) furthers them in the Book of Revelation. The analysis demonstrates that Genesis 1–11 tension related to the city of man is carried into the Apocalypse and brought to a dramatic culmination with the consequent resolution through the new creation with the focal point in a city that is of divine origin, make, and purpose.

The Revelation observes the situation of the seven churches within the environment of the seven Pagan cities, hinting at the intrinsic relatedness of man and city. As the scenes progress, the two diverge and develop into each other's opposites, the latter into Babylon the Great and the former into New Jerusalem. Both are metonyms for two kinds of people: their beliefs, societies, cultures, and values. Babylon pretends to be the ideal city but is full of violence, depravity, and human exploitation; thus, it perishes and disappears. On the other hand, the New Jerusalem is built by God as the central feature of the new creation, the true ideal city,

[91] Greek (Roman) mythology reflects Mesopotamian roots. See Charles Penglase, *Greek Myths and Mesopotamia: Parallels and Influence in the Homeric Hymns and Hesiod* (London, GB; New York, NY: Routledge, 2016), 1–12 and 200–5.

[92] Middleton, *Reclaiming Biblical Eschatology*, 139–45.

or the transformed humanity that will stay forever.

Revelation, essentially, reiterates the postulates laid out in Genesis 1–11; yet, in the process, it develops and redefines them and escalates to another, higher level of reality. Thus, it (a) integrates and formulates the themes and motifs from protology, such as the creation, the kingship, and the presence of God; (b) compounds the already existing crisis related to the city by adding the contemporary concerns; (c) points to resolution by introducing a different kind of city; and, finally, (d) restores man according to *imago dei* to his original purposes. This is accomplished in the New Jerusalem, which represents the new kind of society and the new kind of government. Their measure is man himself and not institutions, oppression, and utilization of the fellow man that bears the same divine likeness. However, it is not every kind of human being but the resurrected and transformed people that, through *imitatio dei*, manifest high moral and ethical orientation within the monotheistic setting.

This eschatological outlook makes clear that more than a mere individual is the center of divine attention. Rightly understood, the Garden, as the appropriate environment for divine human relationships, was a starting point established by God in anticipation of a developed human society based in spirituality and theocentric culture, now epitomized in another divine creation, the New Jerusalem. Naturally, being a part of society means being actively involved in all of its aspects, which include culture, polity, and politics too. With the absence of a designated temple and the city being the throne room of God, holiness extends to the whole earth. Thereby, holiness is implied to be the innate attribute of the entire society, its culture, and its functions. Since Christians already enjoy the citizenship of the heavenly city while still on this earth, there are some practical consequences of this reality.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

The task of this inquiry was to (a) observe some aspects of theology of the city in selected ANE text, and (b) compare them with the views expressed in biblical protology and eschatology, and (c) make a note of theological developments in these two areas. The goal of this task was to explain the negative stance in the Bible toward the city, which this inquiry maintained was due to the fact that the city is not a religiously neutral concept or symbol but intrinsically related to the ANE polytheism and anthropomorphic concepts of deities. Likewise, this inquiry held that there is coordination between biblical protology and eschatology in formulating a particular attitude toward the city.

Review of Findings

The Mesopotamian literature contains a non-systematic, oldest, comprehensive, and most elaborate theology/ideology of the city in the ANE world, aside from the Bible. The idea of the city permeates all aspects of existence, both human and divine, the living and the dead, and is set in cosmology as a dominant organizing principle. Thus, it was an indelible part of the constellation that connected and bonded the gods, kingship, and the temple, even when the political spectrum became dominated by the royal court and the territorial state.[1]

Syrian literature is very limited in both amount and scope, with the city nowhere on the conceptual horizon.[2] At the same time, the Hittite literary corpus stands next to the

[1] Mesopotamian beliefs are a conglomeration of various concurrent traditions, and, though some versions of myths achieved canonical status in terms of their literary transmission, there was not a body of writing that would even pretend to be an established religious canon. At some point, the city became personified, even deified, thus elevating human accomplishment to a divine level.

[2] In Syria, we encounter the tribal gods, who are not creators, and the cult of ancestors. Consequently, the myths reflect either the absence of any particular interest in creation and cosmology or very vague and superficial ideas (the idea of the Underworld as a city is merely a lip service to the Mesopotamian tradition). Therefore, cosmogony and theogony are undeveloped and quite basic, if any. In Ebla's case, it appears that the city is merely a necessary product of the economic and political centralization of a tribal pastoral society. The local deities are the tribal gods that are not envisioned as the creators of the universe but as the unifiers and protectors of the tribe, especially the king.

Mesopotamian in volume, still with little or no interest in the city, except in the late compositions influenced by the Babylonian myths. Also, these writings displayed different views on the destiny of the dead, of which one confined only the ordinary people into the city. In practice, though, kingship, the temple, and the city formed a triangle of dependencies and influences both in Syria and Anatolia.[3]

The Canaanite writings are almost nonexistent, apart from scarce inscriptions. On the other hand, the Ugaritic literature is of relative quantity and scope and, also, more North Levantine in character. As such, it displays a Syrian and Anatolian lack of theological/ideological and literary affinities for the city; nevertheless, the practical orientation focused on the same triangle of dependencies is substantive. Curiously, the dead were placed in the city, just as in Mesopotamia. The Phoenician writings are very late and quite Hellenized; however, whatever little is there displays curious interest in the city and the motifs related to it.[4]

Egyptian literature is very diverse and voluminous, yet bereft of almost any interest in the city. This can be explained by Egypt's geography and political history, in which the place and role of the city were at best peripheral.[5] So, the incentive to reflect and develop a concept that would include it was low. The exception was the cities or "locations" of Osiris inhabited by the dead.

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[3] Hittite kingship sprouted from the Anatolian warlord tradition, not from an ideological struggle with the temple. Thus, the king was the true lord of the city. The worship was distributed all over the Hittite land in different cultic centers and shrines, not focused on the main temple in Hattusha and its main temple.

[4] Israel was between Phoenicia and Egypt neither of which was particularly interested in the city as the principal social institution, with the exception of Tyre. Thus, the implicit and explicit interest in the city in the Bible that, in major lines, corresponds to Mesopotamian traditions and concerns is quite surprising. The lack of any elaborate alternative is even more surprising; there is no attempt to define or suggest a vision of a stratified and structured society in the biblical protology. The tacit preference is given to the family order within a clan and tribal environment at the borders of the urbanized world.

[5] In Egypt, the pattern of societal institutionalization followed a different tangent and was modeled on a national state from the beginning. Yet, the city and the temple were seen as symbiotic, if for no other reason than because of the locality and economic base of the cult.

The Mesopotamian and Egyptian myths had the most prominent theomachies and, practically, were the most dedicated to war, apart from the Hittites. The world order out of struggle was the ideological foundation behind their idea of the earthly kingship, and their kings followed this concept by pursuing constant wars as the true sons of their gods or, even, the gods incarnated. Violence, as a driving force behind society and civilization, is, however, abhorred and rejected in biblical protology and eschatology.[6]

Biblical reflection on the city, as explicated in its canonically ordered protology and eschatology, is the most systematic, the most comprehensive, and the most elaborate in the ANE world. It is also the most conversant with Mesopotamian traditions. However, the biblical ideas, tacit in protology and explicit in eschatology, weave a negative and contrastive attitude toward the city in comparison to the ANE views. The ANE concepts pertaining to the city, kingship, and temple are re-defined in the Bible in accordance with the worldview sprouting not only from the monotheism of Israel but also and primarily from (a) the disparagement of idolatry,[7] (b) the anthropic orientation embedded in the concept of *imago dei*, and its corollary (c) *imitatio dei* with its moral and ethical direction, which are projected both on an individual and societal level.[8] Thus, while protology extends criticism of the prevalent ANE concepts of the city, eschatology, in a complementary way, presents a radical solution in the city that is yet to come. The kingship ideology, such as a single person ruling and his divination as the surrogate of the gods, is

[6] The focus of the new creation is on the New Jerusalem, which implies that the Bible is not intrinsically against the city but rejects any society sprouting from the culture of idolatry, exploitation, and violence.

[7] Mesopotamian mythopoeic, liturgical, and epic writings make it clear that human institutions and accomplishments, thus the city and its governing structures, the temple with its statue, and the royal palace with its king, are all deified, or, at least, the extensions of the deities.

[8] The concepts of the image of God in all humanity and the practice of divine moral and ethical norms in everyday life separate the biblical outlook from the rest of the ANE world.

rejected.[9] Instead, the "image of God"/divine "viceroy" concept, stated in the biblical protology and sustained in eschatology, includes the whole of humankind. The statue or avatar in the temple, with its underlying theoretical premises, is absent in protology and utterly rejected throughout the Bible, including eschatology. At the same time, the ANE temple ideology proper is largely thwarted by envisioning and defining (a) the city as a society, not as an institution or a material structure, but as an embodied home of divinity, and (b) the temple, not as a physical entity, but as being absorbed in God.

From the cosmological perspective, the New Jerusalem is constrained to the earth, yet, by its design, it reaches out to and, seemingly, penetrates into the heavens, thus bridging the realms. It is the sum total of creation and the pinnacle of the new creation. Since the New Jerusalem represents a comprehensive new society, according to the *imago dei* concept, not a single member of it is lost or excluded. The renewal of whole nature commences with the restoration of the gravitas of human existence, whereby all divine promises given to the past and present generations find their affirmation in restoration unto life. Therefore, there is only one people, one society, and one city in the renewed cosmos.

Further Reflection and Concluding Remarks

Why is the city so important that it finds a prominent place in the ANE reflection and in the biblical protology and eschatology? Because the "city is pre-eminently a symbol of world government."[10] In the beginning, the city in Mesopotamia, in conjunction with the temple, was beneficial to people. However, it was an ingenious human invention that rose to deification. In time, the city was utilized by one man, the king, for political and economic purposes. In both cases, it occupied the center of reflection on cosmology that purported to maintain the

[9] The kingship was a part of the idolatrous system: the statue of a deity was in the temple, and the son of that god, the king and the high priest, was in the palace hoarding the supreme power. Both concepts are rejected.

[10] Dumbrel, *End of the Beginning*, 31.

established order. Despite the lacuna in the literature of Syria, Anatolia, and the Levant, the material remains indicate that on a practical level the same triangle comprised of the city, the temple, and kingship was widespread, although it incorporated locally specific ideas. Thus, the concept of the city in the ANE world was static and utilitarian.

However, the city in the Bible distinguishes itself, in comparison to the ANE thought, as an explicitly prophetic and eschatological category characterized by an earthly and heavenly dichotomy of origin, manifestation, and destiny. Thus, the New Jerusalem symbolizes the new creation, God's people, and, also, the divine government that rules the new humanity. In hindsight, neither Babylon nor the earthly Jerusalem could accomplish this and were rejected.

The development of the protological Garden into the eschatological Heavenly City demonstrates that human society is not an aberration but the anticipated outcome from the beginning. But humans are self-centered, greedy, and self-indulgent in pursuit of delectations. Consequently, every society based on humanism and not spirituality is deviant, unable to adhere to justice and righteousness[11] and, as such, is ultimately rejected. On the other hand, spirituality or godliness is transformative, as it is implied in Enoch's "disappearance" and the mandate to Abraham to "walk with" or "before" God. So, the new society epitomized in the New Jerusalem will consist of transformed people who can fulfill the original design purposes to rule the natural and social world properly. For these reasons, every compromise that exalted and gave preeminence to human rule was rejected in protology, while eschatology announces and affirms the "final Kingdom of God rule" that merges "people, place and divine presence."[12]

From a larger biblical perspective, there are two directives related to urban living: (a) the citizenship of the saint is not related to the earthly locality (Phil. 3:20), and (b) there is a city that

[11] Ibid., 182 and 196.

[12] Ibid., 1.

is coming as a divine answer to human need for an extended community (Genesis 4–11 → Revelation 21–22). Based on the view espoused by the Book of Revelation, the reality of life is that believers live in cities under different, either favorable or unfavorable circumstances. Yet, at present, they are not called to physically leave cities and embrace different lifestyles. Instead, they are warned not to compromise their convictions as they actively participate in building (Jer. 29:4–7) and transforming society here and now (Matt. 5:13–14) in a peaceful, nonviolent way (Matt. 5:9).[13]

On the other hand, the open-ended nature of the last chapters of the Revelation points toward the future and, as such, anticipates further developments once the new reality is actualized. Thus, the idea of the city that is adhered to in biblical protology and eschatology is anthropic, dynamic, and viable. The negative assessment and attitude toward the city in Genesis and the Revelation, therefore, has to be viewed within the larger framework of criticism of the ANE ideas and practices sprouting from its particular worldview that shaped its institutions. This understanding, armored with consideration of both positive and negative insights contained in this critical stance, should inform further reflection and praxis related to the city in our time.

[13] The Revelation repeatedly refers to the cosmic war, yet descriptions of the war scenes are conspicuously absent. The announcements of war are immediately followed by the proclamations of victory. Likewise, the means of war are decidedly nonviolent, such as the "word of God," "witness," "the blood of the Lamb," "keeping the commandments," "holding to the testimony of Jesus," and rejection of idolatry.

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